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# THE HOMILIST.

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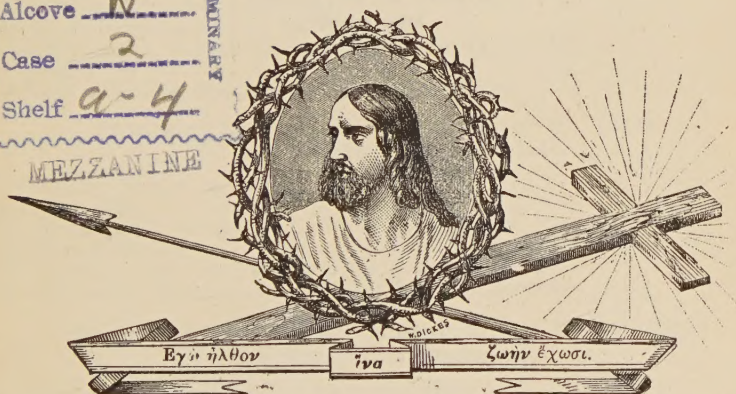
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# THE HOMIIST

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## *Leading Homily.*

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### RELATION OF RELIGION TO SOCIAL SCIENCE.

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"THIS IS A FAITHFUL SAYING, AND THESE THINGS I WILL THAT THOU AFFIRM CONSTANTLY, THAT THEY WHICH HAVE BELIEVED IN GOD MIGHT BE CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS. THESE THINGS ARE GOOD AND PROFITABLE UNTO MEN."—*Titus* iii. 8.

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**T**HERE is, we may be sure, but one ruling thought in our minds at this moment, the relation of Social Science to Religion. This Congregation is a witness that such a relation is believed to exist.\*

By the first of these two factors we mean to include all that may be learned by history and observation as to the nature and conditions of social and national well-being, the result of methodical inquiry into economical and sociological phenomena; and finally the enactment of laws, those restraints which an intelligent community, having attained freedom, proceeds to impose and enforce on itself for its own good.

The second is a phenomenon and factor in life hitherto universal, the power of religion. It has always been a great power in social life, and its standard, though perhaps not its influence, has always been rising and never falling. It is based on human nature itself, man's necessary relation to the infinite, to the super-

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\* Preached in St. Mary's Church, Nottingham, before the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, and published in *The Homilist* with the sanction of The Council.

natural, to God. Now it is not necessary that there should be any relation or co-operation between these two great powers. Social Science might be toiled for from scientific or utilitarian motives with as little religious feeling as Chemistry. Religion might be a purely speculative or a purely personal matter: either an abstract philosophy, or the sense of individual sin, forgiveness, salvation.

An illustration of this separation, full of instruction for us, may be found in the second and third centuries of our era, in Rome. In that age may be seen the work of a Social Science Association as great, as wise, as unselfish, as powerfully patronised, as any Association in our day. It was the age of the great Stoic politicians, to whom are due the genius and humanity of Roman law. Simultaneously, but existing wholly apart, may be seen the religious individualism of the Christianity of that age: which disregarded politics and economics; whose maxim was to obey the *de facto* government; which preached resignation, not amelioration; which occupied itself more with the next world than with this.

These two factors existed then, and may still exist, without relation to one another. But this separation tends to paralyse both. For each supplies something that the other lacks. Assuredly they must be united before the kingdom of God can come.

The pursuit of science is with some few men a species of worship: the passion for truth, the presence of the infinite, the reverence it brings, are almost a religion. And it might be assumed that Social Science and legislation, with its keen human and moral interests, would be the most religious of sciences. Nevertheless it is not necessarily so. It involves the danger of treating men as instruments, as means; not as moral beings, as ends. It may harden, not deepen. And what power does it possess to create motive? To know the best course is one thing: but how is the will of the social reformer to be braced to the necessary toil? The root of volition is not knowledge but feeling. How are we to get to feel as we know? Social Science needs then a motive outside itself. Isolated it dies, as Stoicism died, not wholly ineffectual, but disappointed, despairing.

It is more important to remark that Religion suffers no less where it is divorced from life. And it suffers from this cause among us now and throughout Christendom. It is too much an affair of Church and opinions and mysteries, and of conventional believing for believing's sake; too little the sympathetic beneficence of an active life in the world. Busy men, and the best men and women are busy, find that what is by others called religion is crowded out, and that their high social aims are viewed with suspicion. Many a noble heart drifts into what is called irreligion, drifts into a contempt for religion, because the religion presented to it is so unworthy, so unaggressive, so subjective. Now the truth that I am here to proclaim is that these two powers must work in closest alliance. Religion will contribute the motive, the love; the infectious, undying zeal that springs from Christ. Science the method, the sphere. This is, I am sure, the line of progress along which we are moving and may move faster, and on which we may find a cure for some of the evils we deplore. This is something worth living for. This is why we meet here to-day.

This combination offers a key to some yet unsolved problems in the life of individuals. Here perhaps is to be found the object of our boasted individual freedom. Freedom for each man to think, and speak, and act as he will, is ever growing. But to what purpose? Freedom is a means, not an end. This is, I suppose, Mazzini's meaning in his great saying that it is no longer rights but duties that the social reformers must preach. Social Science has become religious. Here too is the cure for aimlessness, for melancholy, perhaps even for cynical worldliness. Here is an aid to purity and simplicity. In such a combination may also be found the solution of some speculative problems that tease us. A man learns himself by action, not by self-observation. "Do thy duty," as Goethe said, "and thou shalt know what is within thee." Obedience and love, as Christ tells us, bring an unexpected insight into divine things. Here too you may find Christ, if you never found Him before, where so many of the most deeply religious spirits of our time are finding Him, men and women who in past centuries would have sought Him in



monasteries and convents. He lived on earth with the outcast, the suffering, the poor; and there you will still find Him, though you may have sought Him in vain in the homes of the rich, or in books of devotion,

Believe it, 'tis the mass of men He loves,  
And where there is most sorrow, and most want,  
Where the high heart of man is trodden down  
The most, there most is He: for there is He  
Most needed.

Again, the same combination may solve some problems of society. One great evil of our age is the width of the breach between classes in our cities, and England consists of cities. The wedge of separation is daily being driven home by natural causes, which left to themselves will widen the breach and ruin the nation. Social Science has to find a cure for this, a cure by prevention, not revolution. And in such a work Religion is her best ally. Religion could at once put a hand across the breach from both sides; it teaches the true brotherhood of men in Christ; gives men faith in God; teaches the rich that wealth is a splendid trust, and the poor that poverty is not ignoble. Religion alone, and I mean by that the love of God alone, could support such workers as Oberlin and Edward Denison, as Mary Carpenter and Octavia Hill, and others of that noble band, known or unknown to fame, who have served and are serving God in the service of their fellows, and are the salt of the earth.

But it is not less true that this combination of Social Science and Religion is the one condition for the permanence and true life and growth of Social Science. Social Science is ultimately based on some philosophy. It may be utilitarian and agnostic; it may be theologic and Christian. The real danger of the students and professors of this science is that they should limit their views to practical utilities and convenience, and should study phenomena alone, and not endeavour to base their action on a real philosophy, and to guide it with a view to some high aim. This high aim, the recognition and extrication of the spiritual and divine element in man, lost and smothered as it may seem in evil, is the only worthy and permanent aim. Materialistic and

Evolutional philosophies have for the time perhaps obscured this divine, supernatural element in our sociological philosophy, or shaken confidence in it. But nevertheless this truth is the foundation of all social philosophy, and therefore of that Social methodical action which we call Social Science. Utilitarianism can never be the basis of vigorous social action. Men will judge of their own interests; and the interest of the nation and the race, in the long run, often conflicts with the interest of the individual in the short run. But the fundamental belief of religion that man is made in the image of God, and the belief that Christ is our Restorer and Saviour, the proof to us that love and self-devotion are essential elements of the divine and therefore of the highest human character, these are the only permanent springs of consistent endeavour to bring about the coming of the kingdom of God.

In the same combination is the hope of the Church. We must never lose the hope of attaining a less sectarian Christianity. Christianity, with all its various denominations, as it exists in England, or English speaking countries, does not fulfil the mind of Christ. Let us insist on this. We are not one in spirit. We have not got the true perspective of duties. Variety of opinion, dissent, is a sign and healthy sign of earnestness; but bitterness, discord, exaggeration of differences, angry exclusiveness, ought to diminish. Now this result may be aimed at in two ways: one is by arguing about the unimportance of points of difference, and endeavouring to produce amalgamation on points of agreement. This is hopeless. The other and more hopeful way is to forget for a while the points of difference in a great enthusiasm, and thus learn by practice the points of agreement. And experience proves that the enthusiasm for social amelioration, the infection of a grand aim, are strong enough to make Christians of all denominations work together. Any great aggressive philanthropic movement, the abolition of slavery, the promotion of temperance, the protection of women and children, the relief of great temporary local distress, does in fact bring men on the same platform, and give them mutual respect, who will meet in no other way. This is one of the signs of the times.

And we surely cannot doubt that for many ages past Christianity has too little aimed at the improvement of social conditions. It soon began to regard the earth as but a lodging place; it forgot that the kingdoms of this world, as well as the kingdom of the next, were to become the kingdom of Christ. It is the old charge of want of patriotism. "They dwell on earth, but they are citizens of heaven," was said of the Christians of the second century. But in remembering that Christ came to save, we need not forget that He came also to heal and to fill with brotherly love, and that this was the sign of His Messiahship to which He appealed. We are too much haunted by the mediæval, unchristian opposition between secular and religious. We dare not boldly say, though few will deny, that the first religious duty of a community is to make the conditions of life for every member of it such that he may arrive at the best of which he is capable. That this truth has begun to be whispered is another sign of the times. When this truth takes possession of us it will be a new departure.

A new departure of some sort is imminent. The only question is in what direction are we to work for it. I believe it is in the direction of Social Science pursued in a religious spirit. For if Christianity moves along this line it will find itself in the first place reinforced by the irresistible democratic movement of the age. The deeply seated inherited religious feeling of the industrial classes in England, their faith and trust in God, their wonderful kindness, patience, sympathy, hope, are still, in spite of all discouraging signs, the basis of a national religion and a National Church. If Church Christianity had in it more of these practical elements of faith and love, and less of a routine and a sentiment which seem to the poor to sanction unlimited class isolation and personal selfishness, and which are in fact so terribly frivolous and unchristian, then it would be no more possible to overturn our National Church than to upset a pyramid resting on its base.

In the second place the appearance of direct collision between religious faith and materialistic philosophy would be evaded; they would be seen to be moving on different lines. It is true that the materialist and the Christian must always differ *toto celo* in opinion; but a contest about opinion would be seen to be



of a secondary importance as compared to the Christ-like and truth-loving life; and the life of a true Christian, as well as the life of Christ Himself, will never fail to command the honour and love of the materialist. He will judge the tree by the fruits.

In the third place, Christianity would co-operate with the sociological forces of the age. The age of struggling for liberty is nearly over in England, as in America. Some few rights have yet to be won: but the far more important question is now pressing upon the Anglo-Saxon race, What use shall be made of liberty? Unrestrained liberty tends to widen the breach between rich and poor; it concentrates advantages on the strong, and disadvantages on the weak. Now it is the aim of the statesman, the social reformer, and of the Christian alike to secure favourable conditions for the physical, moral, and intellectual development of every individual. We know that this can be done only by a free people imposing restraints on itself. This is the present, more or less distinctly seen, programme of statesmen, whether they call themselves Liberals or Conservatives. It is yours to convince the intellect as to the nature and need of such restraints. It is ours to show that this replacement of rights by duties is a part of religion: to induce men for the love of God and their brethren to embrace and insist on such restraints, to make morality keep pace with freedom. We must work together, neither distrusting the other. Thus alone can a free society make progress: for a nation may perish from excess of misdirected freedom. Freedom must be won only to be sacrificed to higher aims. Would that every rank in our nation were penetrated with this truth.

I know what will be said by some who hear or read these words. They will say, "You sacrifice all that is distinctive in Christianity, and then tell us that it can co-operate with science and with the other great forces of the world. But Christianity is and ever will be in antagonism with the world. Christianity is a body of doctrine entrusted to the Church of Christ as her sacred deposit to teach men how to save their souls; it is this she must guard and preach; mere philanthropy is a Christianity without Christ, and without the ordinances of the Church. In

other words it is not Christianity. You are trying to make men good by Acts of Parliament." If this, or any reply like this, is either fair or true, judge ye.

Others, again, from an opposite camp, will say, as was said to me the other day, "I am incapable of thinking the Church anything but an obstruction to Social Science: it is based on principles I cannot accept, barred by tests I cannot submit to."

Is then this co-operation a dream? No: it is not a dream. I believe it is coming. There is a Christianity which may yet bring back the religious spirit into daily life, a Christianity which consists in devotion to the ends for which Christ died, the union, the regeneration, the purification of the world. How can anyone doubt it who believes in the Holy Spirit of God, and in His presence among us? This co-operation might excite a fresh enthusiasm from all quarters: from ourselves the clergy, who are no less influenced by the time-spirit than other men, and are almost ready to say that the most Christlike life now is to do as He did; to be silent on matters of opinion and apply ourselves to the personal, social, and moral needs of our people, and lead them to our Father in Heaven. It would surely call out fresh enthusiasm from our devout communicants, who week by week or month by month devote themselves to God's service. "What are you ready to do?" might be the question put to every communicant, as it is already the question put to every adult member of some American Churches. It might recruit the ranks of our clergy with men who need this vent for their practical energy and devotion. It would open fresh possibilities to that large mass of our fellow-countrymen who see no middle course between materialism and sacerdotalism which leads to anarchy and revolt; and who would see in this development the natural outgrowth of the best side of Protestantism, and the natural reaction against its worst; a Protestantism embracing as frankly the historical criticism and the science of the present as it embraced the revival of learning in the past, and once more including in its ranks the representatives of highest thought. It is a religion which reminds us more of the prophetic and apostolic ideals than of the mediæval and modern; it does not require us to make a sharp

contrast between things secular and sacred, things natural and supernatural; it does not require us to turn our backs on the world to look at God, or on God to look at the world. It does require modesty in its ministers. It does require the "fruits of the Spirit" in all. Surely the time is ripe for such a growth; surely the hour is at hand when the hope of the age shall find a voice in prophet and poet and priest and people, and the world shall wake to its great inheritance in the Gospel of Christ.

To preach such a Christianity we need the help of Associations like yours. It is not ignorant and uncombined philanthropical views, not more charity sermons that are needed, or more so-called charity, but the utilisation of our ministry to enable Christian communities to co-operate for their highest well-being, the scientific organisation and direction of religious zeal.

But it is time to conclude; and I will only say one word more. Aim high, and never despair. There is plenty to do on the largest scale: education, land laws, drink laws, prostitution, vagabondism,—But it would be presumptuous in me to attempt to enumerate. Let no private right be pleaded as an excuse for public wrongs. For private rights compensation can be found. There is none for a public wrong. Let no one think that our present shameful condition is inevitable; it is the result of our past and present laws. It is *our* duty to protect the weak. The helpless and the poor cannot protect themselves against ignorance, vice, ill sanitation, overwork, tyranny. The study of other countries will help to point out the causes of the evil; it is yours to find them out, and to blazon them abroad with the utmost publicity in your power, and to persevere until they are remedied. Never despair. I know that it is heartbreaking to

Haggle with prejudice for pennyworths  
Of that reform which your hard toil will make  
A common birthright of the age to come.

But this endurance and faith and chivalry is the special virtue of a social reformer, and without it you are talkers and no more.

And let each one carry into effect in his own person this identification of religion and work for others. Let him do some-



thing for his city, his parish, nay for one street, one household. Give something more than money ; your time, your thought, your love. You are not called on to reform the world ; you are called on to do something for your neighbours, to show that you have the spirit of Christ.

It is a pleasure to me to utter these words of hopefulness in Nottingham, for I know no city in the country which is more enlightened, more public spirited. You have done something. But you know, better than I can know, what work has yet to be done, before you can think or speak without sorrow and shame of the condition, social and religious, of thousands upon thousands in this place. But this work may be done ; and it is a glorious sight to see Nottingham welcoming the students of Social Science within the walls of her grand old church of St. Mary's ; a triple alliance of Common Sense and Science and Religion in the cause of Patriotism and Humanity.

Finally let us pray for God's blessing on this meeting, that it may be marred by no jealousies or thought of winning fame ; but that love to God and man may rule in your hearts, and that the Holy Spirit may guide all your counsels to the glory of God in the well-being of man.

CLIFTON COLLEGE.

J. M. WILSON, M.A.

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DEPENDENCE IN RELIGION UPON FRAMES AND FEELINGS BOTH UNREASONABLE AND MISLEADING.—Dr. Whewell, Master of Trinity, writing to a friend in the year 1822, thus speaks of attaching too much importance to the perpetual changes of feeling to which every one is subject :—"It appears to me exceedingly wrong, to say no more, to suppose that a person's salvation depends on the state of his spirits. As these vary, our confidence in what we hope changes also. We sometimes doubt of the affection of our friends for some melancholy moments. But do not all judicious persons wait for the recovery from such depressions, and trust to a firm and long-tried friendship in spite of them ? And shall accidents and caprices overcome the operation of a steady principle in religious matters when they do not in worldly ones ? I believe that people are now doing much harm by making religion depend on these ebbs and flows of feeling."

T. B. K.

# Homiletical Commentary.

## HOMILETIC SKETCHES ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

### Genuine Worship.

“Praise ye the Lord :

For it is good to sing praises unto our God ;

For it is pleasant ; and praise is comely.

The Lord doth build up Jerusalem :

He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.

He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

He telleth the number of the stars :

He calleth them all by their names.

Great is our Lord, and of great power :

His understanding is infinite.

The Lord lifteth up the meek :

He casteth the wicked down to the ground.

Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving ;

Sing praise upon the harp unto our God :

Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth,  
who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.

He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.

He delighteth not in the strength of the horse :

He taketh no pleasure in the legs of a man.

The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in  
His mercy.”—*Psalm cxlvii. 1-11.*

HISTORY.—“It is not improbable,” says *Perowne*, “that not this psalm only, but the rest of the psalms, to the end of the book, are all anthems originally composed on the occasion of the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem completed by *Nehe-miah*. The wall had been built

under circumstances of no ordinary difficulty and discouragement (*Neh. ii. 17*). Its completion was celebrated with no common joy and thankfulness (*Neh. xii. 27-43*). “That was a glad and a solemn day for Jerusalem when, after many difficulties and discourage-

ments, the walls of the city were once more rebuilt, and they were enabled to keep the feast of the dedication. The Levites were summoned to Jerusalem from their several cities, and a solemn perambulation of the wall was made by two bands of singers. Starting from the western wall, one choir went to the right and made the circuit of the southern wall, the other to the left along the northern wall, until they met on the eastern wall and drew up either in or by the Temple, when festive sacrifices were offered amid music and shouts of joy."—*Prebendary Young*.

ANNOTATIONS: Ver. 1.—"*Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.*" "O praise Jehovah, for it is a good and pleasant thing to sing praises unto our God, yea a joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful."—*Four Friends*.

Ver. 2.—"*The Lord doth build up Jerusalem: He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.*" "Rather, the Lord is the builder up of Jerusalem. The work was, probably, just completed. The 'outcasts' or exiles. This is one of the many indications of the date of composition of this psalm."—*Canon Cook*.

Verses 3, 4.—"*He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names.*" "He that heals the broken in heart and bandages their griefs, He counts the number of the stars, He calls them all by their names. Not one of them as it wanders through the wilderness of space is overlooked by Him, not one is missing (Isa. xl. 26). Nor is one of the least of Israel's scattered flock lost from His sight."—*Kay*.

Ver. 5.—"*Great is our Lord, and of great power: His understanding is infinite.*" Or "has no limit" or "no number." He is Omnipotent and Omniscient, All-powerful and All-wise.

Ver. 6.—"*The Lord lifteth up the meek: He casteth the wicked down to the ground.*" "The same Lord, who with infinite power and unsearchable wisdom rules the stars in their courses, rules also the world of man. The history of the world is a mirror both of His love and of His righteous anger. His will and order are a correction of man's anarchy and disorder."—*Perowne*.

Verses 7, 8.—"*Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God. Who covereth the heaven with*



clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains." The clouds that sail through the atmosphere in manifold forms and in rapid succession, that break in showers upon the sterile earth, covering even the mountains with verdure, they are the products of His power.

Ver. 9.—"*He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.*" Or, "Who giveth fodder to the cattle and to the young ravens which call to Him." "It is said that the young ravens are early deserted by their mothers. Their cry is mentioned in Job xxxviii. 41. The word here used for 'cry' expresses the harsh croak of the raven."

Ver. 10.—"*He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: He taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.*" "Not in the might of the horse has He delight, nor in the legs of the warrior takes

He pleasure. The strength of the cavalry steed, or the thews of the infantry soldier, these are not what attract His notice. Reliance on these had been Israel's sin (Isa. xxxi. 1)."—*Kay.*

Ver. 11.—"*The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy.*"

It would seem from this that He who is interested in the whole universe, is specially interested in godly souls. "Unto that man will I look," &c. This verse seems to conclude the psalm.

ARGUMENT.—"This is a psalm in praise of God for the preservation of Israel and the complete restoration of Jerusalem. We have (1) "His praise for rebuilding the city, verses 1-6. (2) His praise for the works of creation, verses 7-11. (3) His praise for restoring Sion to prosperity, verses 12-20."—*Four Friends.*

HOMILETICS.—The subject of this psalm is the great subject of nearly all of the best psalms, viz., *genuine worship*, and it presents to our notice the *transcendent excellence* of true worship, and the *supreme Object* of true worship.

I.—THE TRANSCENDENT EXCELLENCE of true worship. There are three things said about true worship in the first verse.

First: It is good. "*It is good to sing praises unto our God.*" It is "*good*," (1) Because it accords with the *constitution of the human soul*. Man was made to worship. His deepest instincts urge to it, and his distinguishing faculties fit him for it. "Man,"

says *Carlyle*, "always worships something; always he sees the infinite shadowed forth in something finite, and indeed can and must so see it in any finite thing, once compel him to fix his eyes thereon." Worship is the only element in which the soul can thrive and reach its true destiny. It is "*good*" (2) Because it *accords with the Divine command*. We are commanded to worship the Lord our God. Christ said, "The Father seeketh such to worship Him." It is "*good*" (3) Because it *agrees with the genius of the universe*. All creatures, animate and inanimate, moral and non-moral, according to their nature and their sphere, worship. The highest created intelligencies worship, "they cease not day nor night." Surely worship is a "*good*" thing.

Secondly: It is "*pleasant*." There is no happier exercise for intelligent natures than worship, nay, none so happy by immeasurable degrees. It is the grand end of our being, the paradise of our nature; worship is not a means to an end, it is the grandest end, there is nothing higher, it is heaven. He only who loses himself in worship rises to true manhood, he emerges from a grub into a seraph, and revels in the infinite.

Thirdly: It is "*comely*." Is it not a fitting and a beautiful thing that the greatest Being in the universe should be the most earnestly thanked, that the best Being should be the most profoundly revered, that the kindest Being should be the most enthusiastically adored? Right then is the Psalmist in saying, "*Praise ye the Lord*." This is a command that has no limitation to time, place, or class. It should reverberate through all lands, penetrate every ear, and thrill all hearts. It is the one great comprehensive duty into which all other obligations culminate.

"Ah why  
Should we in the world's riper years neglect  
God's ancient sanctuaries, and adore  
Only among the crowd, and under roofs  
That our frail hands have raised?"—*Bryant*.

"God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Notice—

II.—THE SUPREME OBJECT of true worship. In this psalm

He is presented *absolutely and relatively*, what He is *in Himself* and what He is in relation to *His creatures*.

First: What He is in Himself. "*Great is the Lord and of great power, His understanding is infinite.*" How great is He! There is nothing in the universe with which to compare Him. We may compare a dew-drop with the ocean, an atom with worlds, and they remain something; but if we compare the whole creation with God, it is nothing. "Who by searching can find out God?" "He dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto." Great in power, the Force of all forces, in "*understanding*" "*infinite*," immeasurable, the only wise God. "Truly God is great and we know Him not, neither can the number of His years be searched out."

Secondly: What He is in relation to His creatures. He is here presented in His relation to the *human family, inanimate nature, and mundane life*. (1) In relation to the *human family*. (a) Building up useful institutions. "*The Lord doth build up Jerusalem.*" Jerusalem, the scene of spiritual culture, supernatural revelations, and national worship, He, through the instrumentality of Nehemiah and others, restored and established. Such moral masonry He is ever prosecuting in human society, building up schools for the ignorant, hospitals for the diseased, asylums for the poor, and governments for the barbaric and the lawless.\* (b) Uniting scattered peoples. "*He gathered together the outcasts of Israel.*" He brought back the people, those who were scattered through the Babylonian captivity. The human family, through a variety of causes, has separated into different and even hostile parties. God in His providence is constantly, though slowly, gathering them together, by the promotion of one language, by the extension of free trade, by the abolition of political and religious difficulties, and by the advancement of one creed—Christ, and one code—His example. The time will come when all the scattered sheep will be gathered into one fold under one Shepherd. The process of unification is going on.

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\* God is represented in the Old Testament as the Author of the true in the arts of life, such as architecture, agriculture, and government. See Exodus xxxv. 30-34; xxxvi. 1. Isai. xxviii. 24-26. Numbers xi. 24-29. Neh. ix. 20. Numbers xxvii. 18-22. Deut. xxxiv. 9.



Men shall be gathered into one. (c) Healing broken hearts. "*He healeth the broken in heart; and bindeth up their wounds.*" Human hearts everywhere are wounded, bleeding, and broken; some by oppression, some by social bereavement, some by venomous slander, some by moral remorse, &c. The world is a moral hospital and He is the Great Physician visiting every ward and administering relief to every patient.\* (d) Rectifying human conditions. "*The Lord lifteth up the meek, He casteth the wicked down to the ground.*" But few men out of the millions here are in their rightful condition, that is in a position congruous with their moral character. The "*meek*," the good, and the true are down in the valley of oppression, suffering, and want, whilst the "*wicked*" are up in mansions, enjoying all the comforts, and often revelling in all the luxuries of life. The Eternal Father in His providence, is constantly rectifying all this. In every age the good are rising to competency and power in greater numbers, whilst the wicked are sinking lower and lower into social penury and contempt. This will go on until the saints shall be on thrones judging the world. (e) Disregarding martial force. "*He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: He taketh no pleasure in the legs of a man.*" Or as Dr. Kay has it, "Not in the might of the horse has He delight, nor in the legs of the warrior takes He pleasure." To the unthinking, the ignorant, and the servile, warriors are numbered amongst the greatest and grandest of the race. But to God the mightiest and the most brilliant armies that ever mustered on the fields of battle are too contemptible for His notice or regard. They are only as swarms of wasps glittering in the sunbeam. Even the princes of the earth are vanity. (f) Interested in saintly men. "*The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy.*" He has in them the pleasure that a loving father has in his loyal children. Whilst He is interested in all the works of His hand, He seems to have a special interest in the good. "Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the heart of the

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\* See *Homilist*, vol. 2, page 114.

humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." God as the Supreme Object of worship is here presented (2) In relation to *inanimate nature* (a) He is at work in the stellar universe. "*He telleth the number of the stars: He calleth them all by their names.*" No arithmetic can compute the number of those stars which the telescope has brought within the ken of man; yet what telescope, even the mightiest, has discovered one millionth of those which roll throughout the abysses of immensity? He knows them all, calls them all by names. "Lift up your eyes on high," &c. (b) He is at work in the atmosphere. "*Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth.*" Clouds are the cradle of thunder-storms, the reservoir of showers, the home of tempests; these He calls forth in every shape, form, and size to decorate the vault above us and to bless the earth beneath. God as the Supreme Object of worship is here presented (3) In relation to *mundane life*. Two kinds of life are here specified, and each of the humblest kind of vegetable and animal. The grass upon the mountains. "*Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.*" Grass seems to us one of the simplest objects of nature, and yet how wonderful! "Consider," says *Ruskin*, "what we owe merely to the meadow grass, to the covering of the dark ground by that glorious enamel, by the companies of those soft and countless and peaceful spears! The field! Follow but just for a little time the thoughts of all that we ought to recognise in those words. All spring and summer is in them, the walks by the silent, scented paths, the rests in noon-day heat, the joy of herds and flocks, the power of all shepherd life and meditation, the sunlight upon the world, falling in emerald streaks and falling in soft blue shadows where else it would have struck upon the dark mould or scorching dust, pastures beside the pacing brooks, soft banks and knolls of lowly hills, thymy slopes of down overlooked by the blue line of lifted sea, crisp lawns all dim with early dew, or smooth in evening warmth of varied sunshine, dinted by happy feet, and softening in their fall the sound of loving voices, all these are summed up in those simple words—the fields—and these are not all. We may not measure to the full the depth of this heavenly

gift in our own land ; though still as we think of it longer, the infinite of that meadow sweetness—Shakespeare’s peculiar joy—would open on us more and more, yet we have it but in part. Go out in the spring-time among the meadows that slope from the shores of the Swiss lakes to the roots of their lower mountains, there, mingled with their taller gentians and the white narcissus, the grass grows deep and free ; and as you follow the winding mountain paths beneath arching boughs all veiled and dim with blossom—paths that for ever droop and rise over the green banks and mounds, sweeping down in scented undulation steep to the blue water, studded here and there with new-mown heaps, filling all the air with fainter sweetness ; look up towards the higher hills, where the waves of everlasting green roll silently into their long inlets among the shadows of the pines, and we may, perhaps, at last know the meaning of those quiet words, “ *He maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.*” There is animal life mentioned : “ *He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.*” That is to the lowest specimens of life on earth and in air, He feedeth all.

CONCLUSION.—Such is the representation that we have in this poem of the Supreme Object of Worship, *absolutely infinite* in essence and attribute, *relatively busy* everywhere in His universe and with it. Praise Him then who *is* good, and who *doeth* good. He is not dead but living, not inactive but busy, not distant but near. He works in all the events of human history, in all the stars that roll through infinite space, in the clouds that float in the firmament, in all the showers that come down upon the earth, in the grass on the mountains, in the cattle that gambol on the hills, and the feathered tribes of air. He is in all, and through all, and for all, He is the Cause, the Means, and End of all things but sin, originating all the good, and overruling all the evil for good. Then “ *Praise ye the Lord : for it is good to sing praises unto our God ; for it is pleasant ; and praise is comely.*”

“The Lord our God is clothed with might,  
The winds obey His will ;  
He speaks, and in His heavenly height,  
The rolling sun stands still.

Rebel, ye waves, and o'er the land  
 With threat'ning aspect roar,  
 The Lord uplifts His awful hand  
 And chains you to the shore.

Ye winds of night your force combine,  
 Without His high behest  
 Ye shall not, in the mountain-pine,  
 Disturb the sparrow's nest.

His voice sublime is heard afar,  
 In distant peals it dies ;  
 He yokes the whirlwind to His car  
 And sweeps the howling skies.

Ye nations bend—in reverence bend—  
 Ye monarchs wait His nod,  
 And bid the choral song ascend  
 To celebrate your God.”—*H. Kirk White.*

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

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## HOMILETIC SKETCH ON THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN

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### A Mirror of Human Activity.

“THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK COMETH MARY MAGDALENE EARLY, WHEN IT WAS YET DARK, UNTO THE SEPULCHRE, AND SEETH THE STONE TAKEN AWAY FROM THE SEPULCHRE. THEN SHE RUNNETH, AND COMETH TO SIMON PETER, AND TO THE OTHER DISCIPLE, WHOM JESUS LOVED, AND SAITH UNTO THEM, THEY HAVE TAKEN THE LORD OUT OF THE SEPULCHRE, AND WE KNOW NOT WHERE THEY HAVE LAID HIM. PETER THEREFORE WENT FORTH, AND THAT OTHER DISCIPLE, AND CAME TO THE SEPULCHRE. SO THEY RAN BOTH TOGETHER : AND THE OTHER DISCIPLE DID OUTRUN PETER, AND CAME FIRST TO THE SEPULCHRE. AND HE STOOPING DOWN, AND LOOKING IN, SAW THE LINEN CLOTHES LYING ; YET WENT HE NOT IN. THEN COMETH SIMON PETER FOLLOWING HIM, AND WENT INTO THE SEPULCHRE, AND SEEING THE LINEN CLOTHES LIE, AND THE NAPKIN, THAT WAS ABOUT HIS HEAD, NOT LYING WITH THE LINEN CLOTHES, BUT WRAPPED TOGETHER IN A PLACE BY ITSELF. THEN WENT IN ALSO THAT OTHER DISCIPLE, WHICH CAME FIRST TO THE SEPULCHRE, AND HE SAW AND BELIEVED. FOR AS YET THEY KNEW NOT THE SCRIPTURE, THAT HE MUST RISE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD. THEN THE DISCIPLES WENT AWAY AGAIN UNTO THEIR OWN HOME.”—*John* xx. 1-10.

EXPOSITION : Ver. 1.—“*The first day of the week.*” The Jewish Sabbath was the last day of the week, Saturday. The disciples

of Christ made the first day their Sabbath, because on that day Christ rose from the dead, and they called it the Lord's



day. "*Cometh Mary Magdalene.*" Matthew has "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary." Mark—"Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James and Salome;" and Luke, the "women which had come with Him from Galilee." These he enumerates as "Mary Magdalene and Joanna, and Mary, the mother of James, and the other women that were with them." John only speaks of one woman, Mary Magdalene. There is no contradiction; but the differences show that there was no collusion, no fabrication. It might be, indeed, that the different women were at the sepulchre at different times. "*When it was yet dark.*" The mere glimmering of dawn. "*And seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.*" This fact is made emphatic in all the accounts, especially in Luke xxiv. 2.

Ver. 2.—"*Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter.*" Matthew has, "to His disciples," Luke, "to the eleven, and to all the rest." "*The other disciple whom Jesus loved.*" Thus John describes himself, and with characteristic modesty speaks of himself in the third person. "*And saith unto them, they have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we*

*know not where they have laid Him.*" It is supposed that the plural here included the other women whom the synoptists mentioned. The language is a passionate cry of a woman's heart. As if she had said they have not only crucified the Lord, but have stolen away His body.

Ver. 3.—"*Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.*" The details here are peculiar to this Gospel. Luke mentions Peter, but no one else. "The sense here is pictured with all the vividness and exactness of what one himself saw and took part in."

Ver. 4.—"*So they ran both together.*" She ran, and they ran. "*The other disciple*" (that is John) "*did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.*" "The histories of the resurrection, by the Evangelists, betray at every clause their fidelity to nature and truth. There is that agitation, that fear, that hope, that joy which we should expect. There is running hither and thither: the breathless haste of excited, astonished persons, who hurry back and forth, almost beside themselves, with a thousand conflicting feelings. The women ran (Matt. xxviii. 8), Mary Magda-

lene ran, and Peter and John ran, as if in competition with each other. There were tears, and prostrations of reverence (Matt. xxviii. 9), and glad reports carried to the absent; and every mark in nature of the reality of this stupendous fact that the crucified Jesus had walked forth from the rent tomb a living being, bringing life and immortality to light."

Verses 5, 6.—"*And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie.*" How like impulsive Peter is this! He rushed into the sepulchre which John, perhaps, either from reverence or dread, did not venture to do, although it would seem that he was first at the sepulchre.

Ver. 7.—"*And the napkin, that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.*" The napkin, it would seem, lay apart from the other pieces of linen. This minute description indicates a complete personal acquaintance with the incident. *Alford* says, "We seem to hear the very voice of Peter describing to his com-

panion the inner state of the tomb."

Ver. 8.—"*Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.*" "*Believed*" what? Evidently, what Mary Magdalene had said, viz.: that they had taken away their Lord. I remember reading, many years ago, a most masterly discourse entitled, "Unconscious Influence," founded on this incident, by Dr. Bushnell.

Ver. 9.—"*For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.*" What Scriptures? I am referred by some to Isaiah li., Psalm ii. 7, xvi. 9, 10; but I find no proof whatever that these passages refer to the resurrection of Christ. There may be some other Scriptures that have not come down to us, but Christ Himself plainly predicted His resurrection. See Luke xxiv. 25-27.

Ver. 10.—"*Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.*" "More exactly, of course, to their lodgings in Jerusalem. They had accomplished the object of their visit to the sepulchre. One, at least, had realised, and he must have told his thoughts to his friend, that the Lord was not to be

looked for in the empty grave, and that Mary's fears were groundless. No enemies had taken the body away. They return, then, with hearts filled with this truth, to ponder over

its meaning, or to tell it to others of the eleven, or to wonder and wait until He should come again to them, as He had promised."—*Bishop Ellicott's Commentary.*

HOMILETICS.—In this remarkable fragment of Gospel History we have a *Mirror of Human Activity*. Man is necessarily an active being : he lives *in* action and *by* it. Inactivity is virtually death ; wrong activity is misery ; right activity, alone, is true living. Hence the world is "full of labour." In this incident we see human activity *inspired by strong love, existing under strong delusion, and ending in sad disappointment*. Here we see :—

I.—HUMAN ACTIVITY INSPIRED BY STRONG LOVE. What earnest activity we have here in Mary Magdalene, Peter, John, and the other disciples ! One hurrying to the other, Peter and John hurrying to the sepulchre, Peter bounding into it and carefully examining the linen. All the faculties of mind and body seem on the stretch. What prompted all this earnest activity ? *Love*. Here we see—

First : The *Law* of Love. What is the law of love ? It is a yearning for the presence of its object. Mary Magdalene and the disciples loved Christ. They had lost sight of Him for some days, and their longing for the sight of Him became irrepressible. Love evermore hungers for a sight of its object ; it will dare mortal epidemics, cross stormy oceans, visit distant islands and continents in order to see, and if possible to clasp to its bosom, its object. Hence the great attraction of heaven is that we shall see Him as He is.

"Let me be with Thee where Thou art,  
My Saviour, my eternal Friend."

Here we see, Secondly : The *Courage* of Love. It was truly a bold thing for Mary Magdalene, either alone or in company with her small sisterhood, to go forth in the dark, enter Joseph's garden, where the Roman soldiers had been all night, and where He was buried, whom the Jewish authorities hated even unto

death. It seemed almost a defiance to the whole Jewish people. But strong love is the spirit of heroism; it will face armies and dare death in its most hideous forms. Here we see—

Thirdly: The *Earnestness* of love. On the wide earth could we discover more vehement earnestness than now around the tomb of Jesus? What strenuous efforts of body, what wrestlings of soul! Strong and sacred love alone is the power to set all the faculties of humanity into vigorous and harmonious action.

“Love, only love, can guide the creature  
Up to the Father-fount of Nature;  
What were the soul did Love forsake her?—  
Love guides the mortal to the Maker.” SCHILLER.

Here see—

II.—HUMAN ACTIVITY EXISTING UNDER A STRONG DELUSION. These disciples hurried forth in the morning, before the break of day, under the delusive impression that they would find Christ in the tomb. For this false impression they were *blameable*, for He Himself had assured them that He would rise the third day. Their ignorance was inexcusable. How much of the world's activity, aye, of the activity of every man, is put forth under illusory impressions. Men seem to be led on by phantasms of their brain; they walk in a “vain show,” they act under the influence of day dreams. One man runs forth to wealth in search of happiness, another to fame, another to sensual gratification, but when they reach the points whither they direct their efforts, they find happiness is not there; it is all an illusion, and a *guilty* illusion, for they have the means of knowing that the happiness and dignity of humanity can only be found in moral goodness. To the eye of angels, methinks, the tribes of busy men, hurrying hither and thither, appear as so many somnambulists, directed by the wild visions of a disordered brain. Looking around us everywhere, we see men in every department of activity, like Oriental travellers, burning with thirst, hurrying along to what they consider to be lakes of refreshing water, and when they approach the spot they find it is a mere mirage, the whole vanishes into air. Each active life is a fiction, and all are pursuing shadows. Why this? Because, like the disciples running to the



sepulchre of Christ, they guiltily ignore facts. Facts tell all men that there is no happiness for them outside of the human soul, that it must well up for them within, not stream into them from without. Facts tell men that there is no true honour or dignity to be obtained outside of them, that true greatness, real majesty, consist in noble thoughts, high purposes, and loyalty to the everlasting laws of the universe; that to be great is to be good, and to be good is to conform to the moral image of the God-man. Solomon sought, with all the earnestness of his nature, for what he considered would make him great and blessed—in fine buildings, splendid gardens, numerous attendants, great wealth, enchanting music, and distinguished knowledge. In all he was acting under the common delusion, and exclaims, “Behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit.” When will humanity be roused from these dreams? When will they see things as they are, and practically recognise eternal realities, “look away from the things that are “seen and temporal,” and pursue those realities that are “unseen and eternal”? When? Truly, says *Archbishop Leighton*, “The whole course of a man’s life is but a continual trading in vanity, running a circle of toil and labour, and reaping no profit at all.” Here we see—

III.—HUMAN ACTIVITY ENDING IN SAD DISAPPOINTMENT. “*Then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed. . . . Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.*” Yes, now they saw He was not there, and “*believed*”: knew that all their strenuous efforts to find Him were put forth under a delusion. What sadness and darkness this discovery must have spread over their souls! The outward world was “*dark*” when they came forth; no stars shone on them, and the sun had not skirted the horizon. It was dark too, probably, when they wended their steps homeward, but the outward darkness was only a symbol of the depressing darkness that now enwrapped their hearts—the darkness of a terrible disappointment. They felt that all their exertions had been lost labour. They felt, as *Cowper* expresses it, that they had been

“Letting down buckets into empty wells,  
And growing old with drawing nothing up.”

There are few if any trials in life more distressing than disappointment. But the pain of the disappointment will always be in proportion to the power and influence of the hope that has been blasted. Such experience must be the lot of all who have lived under delusion. Like the man in the Gospel who built his house on the sand, fully expecting a beautiful residence that would shelter him from the stormy blast and the scorching ray, and, just after he had expended much time and great labour to rear it, and the hour when he required it "the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." Ah, what are we all doing in this illusory life but building houses on the sand, houses that must fall to pieces when we need them most, when the storms of eternal realities, with all their lurid lights and violent forces, will beat upon us? Ah, then comes the terrible conviction that all life's labour has been lost! "The setting of a great hope," says *Longfellow*, "is like the setting of the sun. The brightness of our life is gone, shadows of the evening fall around us, and the world seems but a dim reflection—itself a broader shadow. We look forward into the coming lonely night, the soul withdraws itself, then stars arise, and the night is holy."

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

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## NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

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### "God Never Tempts."

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James i. 12, 13.—"BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT ENDURETH TEMPTATION: FOR WHEN HE IS TRIED, HE SHALL RECEIVE THE CROWN OF LIFE, WHICH THE LORD HATH PROMISED TO THEM THAT LOVE HIM. LET NO MAN SAY WHEN HE IS TEMPTED, I AM TEMPTED OF GOD: FOR GOD CANNOT BE TEMPTED WITH EVIL, NEITHER TEMPTETH HE ANY MAN."

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A TRIAL of faith, that is a trial of faith through suffering or persecution, may become through the weakness of him who is thus tried, a temptation to sin. He may have a strong love of life, desire of approbation, an undue love of ease; and being

*crossed* in these by suffering or persecution, he may murmur against Him who has laid the *cross* upon him, his trial may become occasion of sin. This is a conceivable disastrous result of what was meant to turn out far otherwise, of what was intended to be rewarded with the crown of life: not only conceivable, often sadly illustrated in the history of the Church. There have been apostates from among those who were expected to be martyrs: Erasmus kept aloof from, while Luther threw himself into, Reformation witness-bearing: the young man went away, very sorrowful perhaps, *but he went away* because he was very rich. What was meant to be the triumph of holiness becomes the deep disgrace of sin. Trial is perverted into temptation.

In these circumstances, another characteristic of human nature appears: it casts about for some other on whom to throw the blame. At once the desire manifests itself to minimise the wrong: to get some other to share it, to roll it over on some other, circumstances or upbringing, the suddenness of the temptation and the unpreparedness for it; anything or everything, anybody or everybody but the sinner himself. Now, as in the long run, it is God who arranges circumstances, upbringing, &c., it is God upon whom, for the most part, the blame is laid. "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me." It was God who brought me into those straits; if He had cared much for holiness or for me He would not have brought me where I am compelled to sin! God did not ask my consent when He brought me into this world, and on Him must lie the blame of my sins; He has laid upon me more than I am able to bear.

It is this condition of mind the apostle contemplates, and against which he prays. If they have been suffering for Christ's Name sake, and if their fear of death or love of ease has so far prevailed as to get them to be false to the truth, then let them avoid the further iniquity of blaming God: "Let no man say," &c.

The apostle is thus naturally led from the good meaning of the word "tempt" to its bad meaning: from tempting in the sense of trying and testing a man for his spiritual good, to tempting in the sense of seducing him to his spiritual hurt. "*It came to pass*

*that God did tempt Abraham:*" "*Neither tempteth He any man.*" A verbal contradiction: not a real one. *God did tempt Abraham:* He tried him: put him to a severe test: put his principles, his integrity, his faith to the test, and the purpose He had in view in all this was to let it be seen that Abraham was whole-hearted, and to make him more whole-hearted than ever: it was to allure him indeed, but it was to allure him nearer to Himself; further away from evil and the power of it: into the furnace to bring him out as silver seven times refined. In the bad sense of the word, or the contrary, to seduce, to try to get a man away from goodness and integrity, that is the work of the enemy of God, the seducer and the liar from the beginning! He tempted our first parents that He might ruin them: he tempted Job to get him to curse God to His face: he tempted our Lord, tried to get Him to tempt God that He might destroy the work of God. God tempts for good, Satan and bad men for evil.

Taking the word "tempt" in the latter sense, the apostle says, let no man think or utter the blasphemy that he is "tempted of God, for," &c. Two statements, here—

1. *God cannot be tempted of evil.* He is untemptable: there is not the possibility of temptation assailing him. He is *in Himself* the all-blessed, the ever-blessed, therefore He has nothing to hope for, nothing to be afraid of on the grounds of which He could be tempted. Temptation to evil to mean anything to *me*, must appeal to my hopes or to my fears; it may flatter my desires or excite my hopes, and deceiving me it may seduce me; or it may rouse my fears, it may so work upon my susceptibility to fear as to make me rush into the evil to which it would drive me. *I* can be tempted, but how can He be tempted who already has all things, under whose feet are all things? Can He be tempted through hope or fear? . . . Then there is nothing within Him that could lead Him to be tempted. He is of purer eyes, &c.

2. *And therefore He does not, He cannot tempt to evil.* It needs one who has been himself tempted to sin, self-tempted like Satan, or other-tempted like man, to tempt another to sin. He who tempts has first been tempted, has first sinned; and let it be observed, it is in proportion to a man's or devil's own progress in



sin that he tempts to sin. One has gone far in sin before he tries to seduce another into evil: it is long before the libertine or drunkard incurs the woe pronounced upon those who put the bottle to their neighbour that they may make him drunken! The first degree is walking in the counsel of the ungodly: it is some time usually before he stands still, looks leisurely about him, and feels at home; it may be a long time before he seats himself in the seat of the scornful, but, when once he has got there, he will do his best, or worst, to make all about him as malignant as himself. These are intensely practical concerns: here they illustrate the intemptability of God, and make clear that whoever would lay the blame of his sin upon God first of all blasphemes the name of God, by attributing sin to God, calling God not holy, but sinful. Let no man say it! "I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker."

These considerations in themselves clear out and clear away the refuges of lies! If it hadn't been for my circumstances; if I hadn't been placed in just that situation at that particular time; if I hadn't gone out at just that hour and met the person that I did, I wouldn't have acted thus; it was the conjunction of circumstances that did it; in other circumstances I would have acted very differently. Yes, very possibly, but whom are you laying the blame upon? God cannot be tempted of sin, neither tempteth He any man!

There are two notable features of the present times, the one literary, the other scientific, which are to be carefully watched and guarded against in this matter. The first is that of giving such representations of human life, in works of fiction for example, as confuse or obliterate the distinctions of right and wrong, by placing the personages in circumstances where the reader is led to sympathise with them when they break the very sacredest laws of God. There are novels widely read, without any suspicion of anything immoral in them, where the very foundations of morality are upturned. Suppose a case—it isn't a supposition—in which a man is put in circumstances where it seems almost a just thing to commit murder, and where all the sympathies of the reader are drawn out on behalf of the murderer: there is no immorality worse than that. And why?

Because it represents life in such a way as to make men call in question the doings of the Most High, making them, what Shakespeare ever avoids doing, lose sight of moral distinctions and sympathise with the criminal in his crime. There is such a thing as blood poisoning: there is what is more deadly even than that, where the very life-blood of the soul is poisoned at its very fountain, where its perceptions are perverted, its power of vision distorted, its nature corrupted. It is when, from whatever influence, there is admitted the suspicion that God can lead or bring a man into any circumstances whatever where it will be a necessity, and therefore not wrong, to do wrong. "*Let no man say, I am tempted of God!*"

The other feature I referred to is that which, from partial and one-sided scientific conceptions, takes the form of saying that man is but the child of his circumstances, of his age, of his inherited constitution: consequently has no moral freedom of action: consequently no responsibility or guilt or blame. This is taught or suggested in elementary class-books, it is filtering through the popular literature of the day. Strip it of its verbiage, and it means, "I am tempted of God." . . . And the science that says *that* stands condemned before the bar of the common consciousness of man. Men *know* when they sin that the sin is their own, and theirs the sin of letting temptation near them as well. When he has got away from all the moral darkening of fatalistic theories, and then faces the reality of things in the light of his own conscience, there is nothing which a man is more ready to accept than that which the apostle so broadly and so absolutely lays down. Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust.

Happy is he who can fall back experimentally upon the truth which keeps him from and above the evil meaning of "tempt," who knows the good meaning alone: "blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him," for—

1. *It is a blessed thing to endure temptation, for thus he arrives at a true knowledge of himself.*

2. *Because he is thus quickened into a deeper and intenser spiritual life, making him more watchful, more thoughtful, more faithful.*

3. *Because he thus arrives at the perfection of his being, this perfection wrought out to finest issues through the very trials he has so triumphantly endured.* "He shall sit as a refiner," &c. "Whom the Lord loveth," &c. "No chastening for the present," &c. "For our light affliction," &c.

The truth is the antidote to error: the experience of the power of the truth is the grand preservative against the inlet or incoming of all evil: and let a man endure as seeing the Invisible and as hoping for "the crown of life," which is just the perfection of life, and he will not in any case turn the occasion of triumph into occasion of sin. Temptation to him will ever lead upward, never downward. Like Abraham, he will welcome God's temptations; in the strength of the Holy One he will repel the evil one's seductions.

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

COÖPERATION IN CHRISTIAN WORK.—The wicked and wasteful rivalries and competitions between sects that differ about non-essential matters will not always be tolerated. It will be necessary for the managers of the denominational machines to find a *modus vivendi*. The denominations may continue to exist for a long time, but they will be obliged to come to a better understanding, and not merely sing the praises of unity, but learn to unite in Christian work.

In promoting reforms of this nature, words are often things, and we beg to suggest a word which may help in the solution of this problem. Suppose we stop talking of union and of unity, and begin to consider the duty of coöperation in Christian work. This is the desideratum—coöperation. In town and city and mission field, Christians, the disciples of a common Master, ought to coöperate. Can they coöperate? Who will deny it?

When we come to speak of the methods of coöperation there is much to say. Here wisdom is wanted, but means will not be lacking to men whose hearts are set upon the attainment of the end. In the present number of the Magazine begins a short serial by Dr. Gladden, devoted to the discussion of methods of coöperation in Christian work. We think our readers will agree with us in regarding it as among the most suggestive, practical, and entertaining studies of the subject that have yet been made. It is to be hoped that "The Christian League of Connecticut" will serve as a model for similar movements in other communities throughout the country.—*The Century Magazine*, November, 1882.

## Germs of Thought.

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### The World as a Building.

*Notes from memory of a Sermon Preached by the Rev. John Foster, at Frampton Cotterell, Sunday Morning, November 16th, 1834.—By C. GODWIN.*

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“BEHOLD, THE JUDGE STANDETH BEFORE THE DOOR.”—*James* v. 9.

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THE thought of a Judge is at all times impressive, but to those who feel they are guilty and deserving of condemnation the thought of a judgment is peculiarly solemn. “Behold” is here placed to warn us of the nearness of the Judge. We are generally unwilling to think of Him, but it is certainly our duty to do so. Let you that are aged reflect, that before those whom you now see young around you shall have reached your years you will have appeared before your Judge. And let all of us think that before this building, in which we now are, shall have crumbled into ruins, we must all have stood before our Judge.

We may consider our text as describing a picture:— “Behold, the Judge standing before the door.”

If there is a door there must necessarily be some building to which it belongs.

I.—Let us then think of THE BUILDING.

The building is this beautiful world which we inhabit, the workmanship of a Divine artificer, everywhere displaying the wisdom of its Creator. Not as the atheist would assert, the product of chance. “In six days God created the heavens and the earth.” What an interesting truth is this, for how small a change could even a great number of persons produce in the appearance of the world in that period, yet it was sufficiently long for God to form it out of nothing, with all that it contains.

II.—This building IS PLACED IN A SUITABLE SITUATION TO RECEIVE VISITORS FROM OTHER AND DISTANT PLACES. From Heaven and Hell Visitants come to Earth.

III.—It contains NUMEROUS APARTMENTS, INHABITED BY VARIOUS CLASSES. The high and the low, the learned and the ignorant here dwell together. How convenient is this building



how admirably adapted to the condition of its inhabitants. How beautifully is it furnished, everything that can be required is here bountifully provided by the Master of the house. What a splendid lamp is it lighted by, constantly kept trimmed, and only passing away for a time to enlighten other parts of this same habitation.

IV.—This building is CONSTANTLY UNDERGOING REPAIR. It would soon be in ruins if the same power that created it did not constantly repair it. But beautiful as this habitation is now, it was once still more so. Imagination cannot conceive, or poetry paint, the beauties of this building before sin entered it. When man became polluted, his habitation became changed. Before the inhabitants rebelled against the Proprietor of the dwelling all was happiness and peace, but their disobedience was followed by innumerable evils:—disease and death, war and famine, the burning heat and the piercing cold, the hurricane and the tempest, are all the result of their transgression.

V.—THE PROPRIETOR OF THE BUILDING DEMANDS A TRIBUTE FROM THOSE WHO INHABIT IT. We do not consider it improper in a person who has built and furnished a house, and constantly keeps it in repair, to require a rent from those who inhabit it; and shall we be unwilling to render to Him, whose habitation we dwell in, and upon whose provisions we are fed, that yearly, monthly, daily, and hourly tribute of worship and obedience which He requires of us?

VI.—Let us now consider THE DOOR OF THIS BUILDING. With the doors of our usual habitation our associations are rather of a pleasing nature, they remind us of our liberty, that we are able, as we please, to go out or return. But the door of the building I have been describing we always dislike to think of. We are willing to examine every other part of our dwelling, but we never like to look on that side where the door is situated. But at this door we must all go out, and through it we can never return. I need not inform you it is the door of death. It is nearly always open, someone is always passing through it, and frequently many together. Many persons inhabiting this building are possessed of great wealth, power, and honour, but they do not belong to the individual, they are attached to the building, and

can never be taken from it; when their possessors pass through the door all must be left behind. When any person goes out of the door of his house he can be watched as he leaves it, but when any pass through the door of this building nothing is seen of them beyond it. We know nothing of the condition into which they are gone. How inconceivably great must be the distance they pass through in the short moment they are going through the door. When friends or relatives are passing through this door we can sometimes obtain clearer views of the prospect beyond than at any other time, except when we, ourselves, are entering its portals.

VII.—I referred just now to the strangers who sometimes visited this building. In an early part of its history A MALIGNANT SPIRIT VISITED OUR DWELLING. He came (1) the worst of beings from (2) the worst of places, with (3) the worst of motives (4) upon the worst of business.

VIII.—But since that time THE MOST GLORIOUS OF BEINGS HAS VISITED OUR DWELLING. The Son of God dwelt for a time with man, and although opposed by the former visitor He finally triumphed over him. Other visitors, of an inferior order, upon different errands, are likewise constantly visiting our abode.

“Behold, the Judge standeth before the door.” In vain shall we hope that length of time will so tire Him as to drive Him from His station. In vain shall we hope to pass without His noticing us. As we must all pass through the door, so we must all receive His award. As He is always standing before the door, so He knows all that is taking place within, and of which He keeps a strict account. How important then that we should know the means by which we can safely pass through the door; and that we be reconciled to, and on friendly terms with the Judge who is standing at the door.

IX.—When the PURPOSES for which this building was created are accomplished, when the number of beings whom God has predestinated to inhabit it are all passed away, this dwelling of ours will be destroyed by fire. Awful as is the conflagration which destroys a town or a city, who can conceive the terrors of that day when the earth and all that it contains will be burned up.

## The Church: its Foundation and Corner-Stone.

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“BEING BUILT UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES,” &c.  
—*Eph.* ii. 20.

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IN order to ascertain the meaning and appreciate the beauty of any writer, mark attentively his characteristics. True of all writers, this is true of the Scriptural writers. However strict the theory any one may hold on the subject of inspiration, the fact still remains that the scriptural writers, apart from their God-given ideas, were men like their fellows: their personal characteristics were not interfered with. Hence while the truth is one, the form of its expression is manifold. In Moses, what sublimity! In Samuel and Ezra, what simplicity! In David, what pathos! In Jeremiah, what rugged plaintiveness! And in the New Testament, what plainness in Peter; what tenderness in John; what imagination, what intellectual activity in Paul!

The epistle to the Ephesians amply illustrates one of Paul's characteristic features—the rapidity of his intellectual movement. In the immediate connection of the text Paul is describing the exalted relations and privileges of the members of the spiritual Church. He sets these forth first under an image drawn from the civic life of antiquity, where citizens frequently enjoyed peculiar privileges, and he calls the Ephesian Christians “fellow citizens with the saints.” Before the mind has had time to feel the full force and beauty of this image, that of a family is suggested, a peaceful, united, happy family, and the Church is represented as the “household of God.” We are not allowed to linger even here, for in a moment the idea of a building, a majestic temple is before the mind; all this in the compass of a few lines.

Following out the particular representation of the text, observe—

I.—THE BUILDING which is obviously implied. A frequent image with Paul, and for obvious reasons. Paul was a Jew by birth, and the Temple at Jerusalem, once regarded by him as the

chosen residence of the most High, had not ceased to represent divine ideas. Ephesus, too, had its temple, the glory of the city and one of the wonders of the world; and these Ephesian Christians, though they had ceased to worship at the shrine, had not ceased to admire the beauty of the structure. It suggested to Paul the idea of the Church.

What Church? Read Acts xx. 28, addressed to the Ephesian elders, and you will see that Paul is not referring to any organization, but to the spiritual fellowship, the Church that is built of living stones. This is the Church that alone deserves ardent and enthusiastic love. Let us take care that we do not lose sight of the reality in contentions about its shadow, for organizations are only this. The shadow thrown by some splendid structure, under a brilliant sky, is clear and marked, but it is only a shadow; this is what our ecclesiastical organizations are of the grand reality above, of which God is Architect and Builder. Its foundations were laid by His own hand in the first promise, and its completion is assured by the promise of God Himself.

II.—THE FOUNDATION OF THE STRUCTURE. The apostle's language seems to imply that men are this: and they who attach importance to the position of men in the Christian Church quote this passage in argument or illustration.

It is quoted to justify the notion that *Peter* is the Church's foundation. But the term used by the apostle is plural, including others, if it refer to Peter at all. The passage seems indeed to justify the interpretation of the Lord's words to Peter—"on this rock," &c.—as referring to the doctrine and not to the person as the foundation of the Church; for Paul takes the very same figure and extends its application to the apostolic brotherhood, evidently knowing nothing of the supremacy of one man.

The passage is quoted in the controversy about *apostolic succession*, but the prophets are included as well as the apostles, so that the chain must be carried back to make it complete, "other foundation can no man lay," &c.

*Observe the classes of men specified by the apostle.* Firstly, the



Church is built on the foundation of *the prophets*. In what sense? Prophets and apostles laid but one foundation: they are both evangelical. The apostles wrote of the Christ who had come, the prophets of a Christ to come. The doctrine of Paul, Matthew, &c., is that of Moses, Isaiah, &c. Moreover, the prophets are significant still: they are witnesses to the truthfulness of the claims of the Messiah: they are types of the Christian ministry. Secondly, the Church is built on the foundation of *the apostles*. The idea is that they succeed, but do not set aside, the prophets. The roots of Christianity are in Judaism; in the prophets as well as in the temple services and its priesthood. Thirdly, taking the terms together, it is implied that the two testaments are one: Christianity and Judaism are the same religion, rest on the same foundation truths; not a new temple, only an additional and more beautiful story. We speak of the temple at Jerusalem though there were three: the form changes, the reality is one, including patriarchs, prophets, apostles.

III.—THE CORNER-STONE is Christ: a different idea from that which calls Christ the foundation; the reference is to the one principal stone on which the whole edifice, in a sense, rests. The foundation is made up of many stones: one special stone is here regarded as bearing the main stress of the building, like the key of an arch.

There is meaning in this distinction of the corner-stone from the foundation. Firstly, the Old Testament prophecies are *many*, concerning Babylon, concerning Nineveh, &c., yet there is *one* prophetic thought pervading the whole book; it is Christ. Many stones in the foundation, one corner-stone. Secondly, the apostles preach *many* doctrines, but there is *one* that unifies them all: it is the doctrine of "Christ crucified." Thirdly, Christianity gives *many* hopes, there is *one* that is the brightness of them all—"we shall be like Him."

R. VAUGHAN PRYCE, M.A., LL.B.

STAMFORD HILL.

## Salvation; a Struggle and a Victory.

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"THE CAPTAIN OF THEIR SALVATION."—*Hebrews* ii. 10.

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THREE thoughts are here suggested about soul salvation.

I.—THAT OUR SALVATION IS SOMETHING INVOLVING STRUGGLE AND CONFLICT. Salvation is regarded by many as something external to man, an act complete and perfect at once, a quantity fixed and certain. Hence the question, "Are you saved?" The writer of the verse before us did not thus regard it, or he would not have spoken of Christ under the figure of "Captain." The figure is a martial one, implying a campaign, and so conflict, struggle, hardship, not only on His part, but also on the part of those engaged with Him. This was evidently Paul's view of the matter, too; hence he exhorts the Philippians, "Work out your own salvation," &c. That "work out" implies hard struggling, severe toil, heavy labour. This was Peter's view, too. "And beside this, giving all diligence," &c. "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence," &c. This, too, was the Master's teaching: "Strive," *i.e.*, "Agonise to enter in at the strait gate," &c. All these passages, and others that we may quote, represent "salvation" not as a complete act, but as a process—a life-long process requiring thought, diligence, labour, toil, sacrifice, conflict, struggle. To conduct this process, this campaign successfully, we need a "Captain." Such a "Captain" we have in Christ, who was Himself made "perfect through sufferings." And does not this view of the matter accord with our own experience? Have we not to maintain a constant fight with this and that evil habit, &c. And do we not frequently find the foe, that we had thought vanquished, starting up again, and apparently with new life and increased vigour? You do not want clearer, fuller evidence that your salvation is not complete. You are not saved yet, or these would no longer trouble you.

II.—THAT IN THIS STRUGGLE THERE MUST BE UNRESERVED CONFIDENCE IN THE "CAPTAIN." The soldier may know but little of

the plan of the battle; he may not understand the marches, countermarches, manœuvres, &c., through which his regiment may be put; he does not trouble himself much about these, *he goes into the battle-field to fight the foe*. He has faith in his captain that all he does is wise and right. So it must be with us and our Captain. The campaign of our salvation is a vast, mighty, complicated one—the complete and utter destruction of all the evil and sin in our hearts. It required the wisdom of a God to plan and design it. How, then, can we expect to understand it, to see everything clearly, to know the meaning of this, the reason of that? What would you think of the soldier who now and again refused to advance or to fight because he could not see or understand what his general was doing? No, his vocation as a soldier is *to obey orders*. So with us. It is not necessary that we should be able to assign to ourselves or to others the reason of this or that—why we have to undergo this discipline, confront that foe, surmount this difficulty, charge that enemy, &c. Christ is our Captain; the plan is His—the reasons, arguments are with Him. *Our vocation—work—is to obey orders*. How beautifully simple would be our work, how full of nerve, strength should we be, if we would put unreserved confidence in Him? How much trouble, perplexity, uncertainty, bewilderment, should we save ourselves? Is this a foe? Fight him, &c. Or, without figure, Is this a sin? Battle with it, &c. Is this truth? Dare to speak it, &c. See how beautifully simple. We have to do the fighting immediately before us, to discharge the duty close at hand, to smite the enemy that confronts us. Do you say it is hard work to fight in the dark—we want to see that every stroke is making more sure the victory, that every slain foe leaves the number less? Leave it all with your Captain, place implicit confidence in Him, be content if you are obeying His orders.

III.—THAT IN THIS STRUGGLE THERE IS THE CERTAINTY OF ULTIMATE VICTORY. Human captains may be defeated, &c., but can Christ, the Captain of our Salvation, ever be defeated? Never. The plan of the campaign is His, &c. And can His plan fail, His wisdom be set at nought? Never. His plan is a tried

plan, His wisdom is the wisdom of experience. *Christ is embodied salvation.* He fought the foe, withstood the temptation, trampled the enemy beneath His feet, won the victory. "He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"—*that* was embodied salvation. When a man reaches that point *he is saved.* And not until then. He may be undergoing the process of salvation, but he is not saved until he is obedient to God "unto death." And so our Captain is a tried Captain.

But now see what this implies on our part. The general may be a wise one, his plan of action may be perfection itself, &c., but suppose that his soldiers are idlers, cowards, that they turn back to their foes, refuse to fight, &c.,—what then? Why defeat, disgrace, are sure to follow. His success is ensured by the vigilance and bravery of each individual soldier, each soldier fighting and vanquishing his own man. So with us and the Captain of our Salvation. He may be all that we have represented Him to be, but unless we be watchful, brave, courageous, we shall fail. Though unseen, unrecognised by you, every sin resisted, every temptation withstood—habit denied—passion repressed, &c., is another step in advance, and so another step nearer the completion, perfection of that salvation which must be your heart's desire. Remember the Captain that is leading you on to victory, and let your courage, bravery, boldness, confidence, be worthy of Him. Cromwell's Ironsides were they that caught his iron spirit, and that fought with a determination, resolution, heroism worthy of him. Be you Christ's Ironsides, catch His divine spirit, and "resist unto blood, striving against sin," as He did. "Endure the contradiction of sinners" against yourselves, as He did. "Endure the cross," if necessary, and "despise the shame for the joy that is set before you," as He did. Be "obedient unto death," as He was.

POPLAR.

BENJAMIN PREECE.

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"Alas! alas! we poor mortals are often little better than wood ashes—there is small sign of the sap, and the leafy freshness, and the bursting buds that were once there; but wherever we see wood ashes we know that all early fulness of life must have been."—*Scenes of Clerical Life.*



SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE SECOND BOOK OF  
THE KINGS.

## The History of Athaliah.

“AND WHEN ATHALIAH, THE MOTHER OF AHAZIAH, SAW THAT  
HER SON WAS DEAD,” &c.—2 *Kings* xi.

THE blackest names in the long roll of the world's infamy are those of kings and queens, and amongst them Athaliah is not the least abhorrent and revolting. She was the daughter of Ahab, King of Israel, and of Jezebel, his notorious wife. She married Joram (or Jehoram), King of Judah. She was the mother of Ahaziah, and advised him in his wickedness. After Jehu had slain him, she resolved to put an end to all the children of her husband by his former wives, and then mount the throne of Judah herself. But the half-sister of Ahaziah, Jehosheba, secured Joash, one of the children and heir to the throne, and secreted him with his nurse for six long years. In the seventh year the young prince was brought forth and placed on the throne. Crowds of people assembled to witness

the ceremony, and Athaliah, seeing the crowd, hastened to the temple utterly unsuspecting even of the existence of the young king. When, however, she caught a sight of the young king and heard the hurrahs of the crowd, she felt that her atrocious plans had been frustrated, and in her savage humiliation rent her clothes and cried, “Treason, treason!” But her hour was over; she was too late to rally a party in favour of her own interest, and by the command of the priest she was instantly removed and violently destroyed.

In this woman's life, as here sketched, we have *hereditary depravity, outwitted wickedness, and just retribution.*

I.—HEREDITARY DEPRAVITY. We find in this woman, Athaliah, the infernal tendencies of her father and her mother, Ahab and Jezebel. Though

they had been swept as monsters from the earth, and were now rotting in the dust, their hellish spirit lived and worked in this their daughter. It is, alas! often so. We have an immortality in *others*, as well as in ourselves. The men of long forgotten generations still live in the present. Even the moral pulse of Adam throbs in all. In this fact we are reminded—

First: *That the moral qualities of parents may become physical tendencies in the children.* The man who voluntarily (and all moral qualities are voluntary productions) contracts habits of falsehood, dishonesty, profanity, incontinence, drunkenness, and general intemperance, transmits these to his children as physical tendencies. This is marvellous, but patent to every observer of society and student of history. Who cannot refer to both men and women who have received an unappeasable craving for strong drinks by the drunken habits contracted by their parents? We are reminded—

Secondly: That the evil moral qualities of parents, re-appearing in their children

in the form of physical tendencies, is *no complete justification for the children's wickedness.* This is clear (1) From the fact that God has endowed all with *sufficient force to control* all physical tendencies. Most men have sufficient mental faculties to quench the strongest physical passion. This is clear (2) From the *personal consciousness of every sinner.* When the conscience is quickened the greatest liar, debauchee, drunkard, thief, becomes filled with compunctions for the crimes committed. Every sigh of remorse on account of sin is a testimony to the power of the human mind to control the passions. This is clear (3) From the *Divine Word as found in the Scriptures.* "Whatsoever good thing any man doeth the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." "He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons." The fact of hereditary depravity reminds us—

Thirdly: *That the way to raise the human race is to improve their moral qualities.* Indoctrinate men's souls with truth, benevolence, piety, chas-

tity, purity, &c., and you help on the race to its millenium. And in no other way. The Gospel is the instrument for this. In this woman's life we see—

II.—OUTWITTED WICKEDNESS. No doubt this woman, who thought she had destroyed all the “seed royal,” considered she had made her way to the throne clear and secure. For six long years she had no conception that one had escaped her bloody purpose. Now it was revealed to her, and her disappointment maddens her with vengeance, and excites the desperate cry, “Treason, treason!” It is ever so. “He disappointeth the devices of the crafty.” History abounds with the examples of the bafflement of wrong. The conduct of Joseph's brethren, Ahithophel, Sanballat, Haman, and the Jewish Sanhedrim in relation to Christ, are instances. Satan, the arch-enemy of the universe, will exemplify this through all the confounding crises of his accursed future. A piece of conduct, wrought by the highest human skill and earnest industry, if not in accord with the immutable principles of right and truth,

can no more succeed in its purpose than a house could stand, built regardless of the resistless laws of gravitation. The architecture may look well, the materials be most precious, and the production be most costly, yet down it must come, and confound the builder. Craftiness uses lies as concealment and defence, but the eternal law of Providence makes them snares. One lie leads to another, and so on, until they become so numerous that the author involves himself in contradictions and he falls and founders like a wild beast in a snare. (*“Practical Philosopher.”*) In this woman's life we see—

III.—JUST RETRIBUTION. “Jehoiada, the priest, commanded the captain of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, have her forth without the ranges: and him that followeth her kill with the sword . . . And they laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which her horse came unto the king's house: and there was she slain . . . And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet: and they slew Athaliah with the

sword beside the king's house." Thus "*Sape intereunt aliis meditantés necem.*" Those who plot the destruction of others often fall themselves. Here is (1) A terrible retribution. (2) A prompt retribution. It came on her here before she passed into the other world. Retribution is going on now and here. There is (3) A retribution administered by wicked men. God punishes the wicked by the wicked. The whole history of the world is an illustration of this. Truly "the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment. Though his excellency mount up to the heavens and his head reach unto the clouds, yet he shall perish for ever . . . . Yea he shall be chased away as a vision of the night." An Oriental poet thus vividly describes the retribution that must follow wickedness :

"All vice to which man yields in greed to do it  
Or soon or late, be sure, he'll sorely rue it,

Experience deep, howe'er false seeming  
blind him,  
Surcharged with retribution, out will find him.  
It locks upon his soul a fatal fetter  
Explodes throughout his face in horrid tetter,  
Over his shameless eyeballs brings a blurring,  
Keeps in his heart a deadly fear-load stirring,  
At all pure joys with fiendish talon snatches  
The noblest traits from out his being catches ;  
Each beam and hope and vision darkens,  
His conscience stuns whene'er towards heaven he harkens ;  
On goading thorns his sleepless longings tosses,  
With soul remorse-foam pleasure's waves embosses.  
Sometimes from phantom-fears impels him flying,  
Sometimes in frantic horrors shrouds his dying ;  
Now turns his dearest friends to cease to love him,  
Now spreads avenging Siva's form above him ;  
Makes this world black with prison walls and gibbets,  
And in the next escape from hell prohibits.  
The whole creation's strange and endless dealing,  
In spite of shields and veils and arts concealing,  
Proclaims that whoso'er is long a sinner  
Can only be by it of woe a winner."

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.



## Prayer for the New Year.

"THE LORD OUR GOD BE WITH US, AS HE WAS WITH OUR FATHERS ;  
LET HIM NOT LEAVE US, NOR FORSAKE US."—1 *Kings* viii. 57.

I.—THE NEED THAT SUGGESTED THE PRAYER. Like a child—feeling its entire dependence upon its parent's presence and power—the king prayed,—“The Lord our God be with us.” Our needs are numerous and urgent, our strength small, our wisdom dark; nothing short of the merciful presence of the Lord can suffice us.

II.—THE FAITH THAT PROMPTED THE PRAYER. Solomon knew he was not throwing his prayers upon the empty and mocking air, but that they entered the Divine ear, moved the Divine arm. Let us pray believing that God is “the rewarder,” &c.

III.—THE LOVE THAT DICTATED THE PRAYER. Solomon was not selfish. The presence of the Lord was sought for the satisfaction it would bring to all who loved Him and longed for His fellowship and favour. Let love dictate our prayers as we address them to “*our* God.” If we love Him supremely, the belief that He is ever near will make our spirits glow with ever-increas-

ing affection. Life will feel neither solitary nor little.

IV.—THE HOPE THAT INSPIRED THE PRAYER. Solomon knew that God had given to His people exceeding great and precious promises. Those prospects gave birth to high hopes, and led to earnest effectual prayer. As we look forward into the new year, let hope inspire our prayers.

IV.—THE MEMORIES THAT SUSTAINED THE PRAYER. “As He was with our fathers.” Solomon knew, from what he had heard from David his father, how God had been with him in every time of need, how He had ever been with all who had reposed their trust in Him. These memories sustained his prayer, and made him importunate for a continuation of the Divine favour. We each and all have many hallowed memories that crowd upon us to-day. God *has* been with us, as He was with our fathers; we can sing, as we review the past, “*Ebenezer*”; and therefore, as we look forward we can sing “*Jehovah-jireh*.”

CLIFTON.

F. W. BROWN.

## Seedlings.

### Days of the Christian Year.

Luke ii. 49, 50.

(First Sunday after the Epiphany.)

OF the childhood and youth of the Lord Jesus we are told but very little; it is that part of human life which is best left in the shade. The attempts which have been made to imagine what the evangelists have left unrecorded serve one purpose only, and that they serve well: they shew how utterly incompetent was human genius to construct such a beautiful and noble life as the sacred historians have described. The "life of Jesus" must have been lived, or it could never have been written. The words of our text suggest a theme singularly appropriate to the opening year, viz., *the idea of our life-work*. (1) We have to pass through the *period of necessary unconsciousness*. As our Lord's life began with infancy and passed on, like ours, into childhood, there must have been with Him a period of pure sensation, a time when attention was chiefly occupied with the things of "the flesh." So is it with ourselves. It is hard to realize, but it is true, that there was a time in the history of the most intellectual and the most spiritual when they were with scarcely

any thought of God or knowledge of duty. (2) Then comes a time when *the light of life dawns upon the soul*; before Jesus was "twelve years old" (ver. 42) He had admitted to His mind and pondered in His heart the great thoughts with which the sacred scriptures deal. Very early in human life the loftiest truths present themselves and ask admission to the soul. Very soon the little child entertains ideas which are immeasurably above the reach of the cleverest and oldest animal that man has ever trained. (3) The hour arrives when *the idea of our life-work is recognised by the soul*. In the person of our Divine Lord there was something quite exceptional, unique. To Him "the Father's business" meant that which it will never mean in any other lips. Not that at this time *He* understood all that was included in those words. As He "increased in wisdom" (ver. 52) He became more conscious of the work that was before Him, and as the shadow of the cross darkened and deepened towards the end, He understood yet more perfectly all that the Divine Father had committed to His hands. Nevertheless, Jesus in

the Temple had a very clear and definite idea that His Father had chosen Him to do some great work and He was devoting Himself with simple faithfulness to the sacred task. With us there are two aspects which the life-work may assume: there is (a) *one that is presented to us all with commanding authority.* We reach an hour when we realize the nearness of God to us, the force of His supreme claims upon us, the right of Jesus Christ to say to us "Follow Me," the sacredness and the brevity of life, the solemnity and grandeur of the eternal world. (b) *One that comes to some of us with binding force:* we arrive at a crisis when we feel that God is summoning us to enter on some particular career. This is not always, though often, one distinctively religious; it is that course for which we feel assured that He has fitted us, and in which we can best expend our powers and serve our kind. (4) When this time comes *we may have to fight the decisive battle alone.* His parents "understood not the saying," though we might have thought His mother would have done so. Jesus had often to "tread the wine-press alone," and He had to do this in all the critical hours of His career. We may be profoundly thankful for human sympathy, and especially for

parental encouragement in the crises through which we pass; but with or without these—aided, unaccompanied, or opposed—we must be about "the Father's business" when He calls us to undertake our life-work here.

WILLIAM CLARKSON, B.A.  
BRISTOL.

### John ii. 11.

(Second Sunday after the Epiphany.)

WE are led to think of—

I.—THE MANIFESTED GLORY OF CHRIST. We must consider this (i.) *as it appeared to His Apostles in His life on earth.* And it included (a) extraordinary visible grandeur, such as they saw "when they were with Him on the holy mount" (1 Pet. i. 17, 18); (b) miraculous works, such as "this beginning of miracles" when the water was turned into wine, and those "wonderful works" He wrought on the sick, on the suffering, on the demented, and even on the dead; (c) the surpassing excellency of His life, for *His* glory, like that of His Divine Father (see Ex. xxxiii. 18, 19) was in "His goodness," in His tender compassion for those that had sinned and fallen, in His abiding love toward those that responded to His appeal, in His faithfulness toward his followers, in His patience with the ignorant and imperfect, in His fearless antagonism toward all that was false

and base, in His submission to His Father's will, in His consecration to His heavenly mission. (ii.) *As it is shown to us in every age.* We are not invited to look on any scene like that of the transfiguration; not for our eyes are such visible grandeurs. But we are summoned to see (*a*) illustrations of His Divine power; for in giving sight to the spiritually blind and voice to those who have been spiritually dumb, in making morally whole those whose character has been leprous to the core, in making men who have been utterly paralysed and prostrated to walk, to run in the way of holy obedience and sacred usefulness, Christ has ever been and is to-day shewing forth His Divine power, and so "manifesting forth His glory." We are also witnesses of (*b*) His Divine excellency; for we still follow in His steps and look on His perfect life. We still enter, with Him, the home of the poor, the abode of the sick; we join the multitude that throng Him as He speaks and as He works; we watch with the three in the garden; we stand with Mary and with John at the foot of the cross. It is when we are filled—as we are filled—with a sense of His transcendent goodness, that we exclaim, "Surely this was the Son of God."

II.—THE DEEPENING OF THE DISCIPLES' FAITH. "His disciples

believed on Him there. Had they not, then, believed on Him before? Undoubtedly; their faith had already availed to lead them to attach themselves to His person, to espouse His cause, to offer Him their ministry. But there was ample room for development in this grace of theirs. It would have to grow and to be enlarged, indeed, to be so transformed that it might be spoken of, as here, as if it were a new thing. The faith Peter and John came to have in the unseen, ascended Saviour, was another thing, larger and deeper far than that which they had when they first followed their Lord. Our faith, too, must be a germinant, growing, multiplying thing. (i.) *Its Stages.* From being (*a*) a mere intellectual acceptance of Him as a Divine teacher, it must pass into (*b*) a cordial trust in Him as our own Divine Saviour, into (*c*) a powerful, practical realisation of Him as our present, observant, friend and Lord. From faith to faith we must pass, from one kind and one degree to a deeper and a fuller. (ii.) *Its Sources:* These are (*a*) the quickening influences which are from above, (*b*) the providential dealings of God with us as we pass on our way, (*c*) fresh views of the glory of Christ. We must "know Him" more intimately in His power and His goodness; must gain, as by reverent study



and an open heart we may gain, further and clearer views of the power of His redeeming, transforming, grace, and of the glories of His goodness, and then to us, who are already disciples, shall come such increase and deepening of faith that, at various points of our spiritual career, it will be written of us in the heavenly record, "And the disciples believed on Him there."

WILLIAM CLARKSON, B.A.  
BRISTOL.

#### Revelation xxi. 5.

(For Septuagesima Sunday.)

THE outward is in these verses employed as the symbol of the inward; the material transformation is at once the sign and the result of moral regeneration. He by whom this transformation is wrought, the Great Moral Regenerator is The Christ whom the Apocalypse reveals as enthroned in the heavens. "The Lamb in the midst of the throne." The words teach us—

I.—THAT CHRIST IS THE MONARCH OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD. The prophet Daniel had seen that the Son of Man was monarch of all, and this portion of John's Vision, as indeed much more, is a counterpart of Daniel's. The "man greatly beloved," and "the disciple whom Jesus loved" did, through the intuitions of love,

discern about Christ and about humanity what unloving eyes could never perceive. Paul also describes our Lord as exalted to universal dominion, while Jesus Himself declared, "All power is given to Me in Heaven and in Earth." (1) His dominion is not alone over the *material* universe; though watching His miracle on the sea we exclaim, "What manner of man is this" that not only winds and waves, but worlds obey Him? (2) His dominion is also *spiritual*. Of the realm of Conscience, Duty, Love He spoke again and again as "My kingdom." He is the ideal of what is Royal; for He is (a) The Founder. (b) The Legislator. (c) The Judge of His Kingdom. We want no more Kingly God than He; we can conceive of none. He sits on the throne.

II.—Christ, the Monarch, is also THE RENEWER OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD. "I make all things new." He creates and renews. Looking at the analogy between His work as Creator and that as Renewer we notice (1) *Some points of similarity between the two*. There is (a) *New order*. (Read Genesis i. ii., Corinthians v. 13, 17.) There is (b) *Exercise of Divine Power*. There is (c) *Gradual process of work*. There is (d) *Divine approval on both*. But we notice (2) *Some points of*

*contrast.* The striking contrasts between the Divine work in creating and in renewing are (a) *In the one case there is the calling into being what had no existence before, whilst in the other there is the restoring an order and beauty that had been lost.* (b) *In the one case there is the absence of all obstruction, whilst in the other the hindrances are only overcome by Divine Sacrifice.*

Is not the deep and satisfying impression produced on our hearts by the declaration in this sentence this;—Christ's royalty is the pledge of human regeneration? The Saviour is not here a Suppliant struggling, but a King reigning. Man's future does not depend upon the uncertain destiny of a sword, but the triumphant sway of a sceptre. The Lamb slain is on the throne: the purposes of His sacrifice are certain of fulfilment. EDITOR.

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**Matthew xv. 21-28.**

*(For Sexagesima Sunday.)*

WHETHER we solve the difficulty that the conduct of Jesus here presents, by the supposition either that He was designedly testing the woman's faith, or that in His human experiences He "increased in wisdom" from this contact with her needs and faith, and, therefore, granted a blessing He did not at

first intend to give, matters not for the view we now intend to take of the narrative. We regard it as a record of *Persistent Faith*, and notice—

I.—PERSISTENT FAITH FOUND IN UNEXPECTED CIRCUMSTANCES. Tyre and Sidon were Pagan regions, yet there the Lord finds a faith He often sought in vain in Jerusalem, the home of sacred men, and the site of sacred buildings, and the shrine of sacred memories. How did this woman know about Jesus, or how did she become possessed with this faith? We cannot tell. But we know there are daily modern analogues of this case. For in regions, in classes, in families, where it would have been least expected, are there being discerned the signs of simple faith and of lofty consecration to God. Here is—

II.—PERSISTENT FAITH SEVERELY TESTED. The faith of this heathenness, as St. Mark describing her religion meant to imply she was, had to undergo a severe testing. It is tested (1) *By the silence of Jesus.* "He answered her never a word." Can it be the ear of unwearying pity has grown heavy: that the lips of infinite tenderness are smitten dumb? If that fountain of love is sealed, where can any healing stream be sought? Whatever the cause of His silence, we can un-

derstand how it must have shocked and stunned her. But her faith is also tested (2) *By the conduct of the disciples*. There is a strange want of chivalry in their harsh cry, "Send her away." And she must have felt, Can it be that this clamour of theirs is the interpretation of the strange unwonted silence of this Great Healer? Yet again her faith is tested (3) *By the statement of some perplexing religious theories*. Christ's words to the disciples plainly said He was not sent but to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." And this limited, and shall we reverently say earlier, view of His is enunciated in her hearing. Then He repeats to her a proverb that till that hour seemed to be a maxim, that the bread was for the children, that is, that religion was for the Jew, not for the dogs, that is, not for the heathen. O bewildering words; how the broken-hearted mother must have

been distracted by them. But her faith held fast, for we have—

III.—PERSISTENT FAITH DEVELOPING THE WHOLE HUMAN CHARACTER. This woman endured Christ's silence, and withstood His discouraging word, because she had faith that God could and would help her, and that God was eminently (she probably did not know how wholly) in Jesus of Nazareth. This faith working in her did, as it always does, great things for the character. (1) It nerved her *courage*. (2) It intensified her *reality* in worship. (3) It expanded her *conception* of Divine provision and blessing.

IV.—PERSISTENT FAITH GLORIOUSLY BLESSED. (1) *It is blessed in the commendation of Jesus*. What a wreath of honour His gracious hand puts on this mother's worn brow, this believer's trustful forehead. (2) *It is blessed in realizing its request*. "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

EDITOR.

### The Children of Light.

"FOR YE WERE SOMETIMES DARKNESS, BUT NOW YE ARE LIGHT IN THE LORD: WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT."—*Eph. vi. 8*. THESE words, addressed by the apostle to the converted Ephesians, are not exaggerated. The contrast they establish between their former state and their actual condition is

indeed striking. The thought expressed by the apostle may be translated thus: ye Christians, children of light, sons of truth, be for society what light is for the material world.

I.—LIGHT ILLUMINES. Let your life, in the first place, serve to illumine. We are not all called

to aid the cause of truth by our science or our eloquence, but we are all called to aid it by our life. We marvel sometimes at the slow progress of truth in the midst of humanity; and why does it advance so languidly? Is it not because our piety is so feeble; because there is such an immense distance between our convictions and our life? That the Christian life may be a light, it must be serious and real. That such may spread, it must become a part of our life, nay, life itself. So long as it remains petrified under the power of ideas, it resembles a motionless glacier whose contact produces a deadly chill. But let the warmth of life penetrate these ideas, let the ice melt under the influence of a burning sun, and immediately a river gushes forth whose salutary waters flowing through the plain bring with them wealth and activity.

II.—LIGHT PURIFIES. Nothing is purer than light. It descends from heaven, and when it reaches our earth it touches all its impurities, but without blending with them or losing aught of its brightness. Not only does it ever remain pure, but it purifies all things. See that wretched hovel, that damp and obscure haunt, long deprived of the light of day, it seems as though a curse were attached to it; an unwholesome vegetation has

found in it its congenial soil; it is filled with pestilential exhalations; it has become the abode of the most hideous creeping things; but let a stream of light enter and all these soon disappear, driven away by its beneficial action. Light is the cure because it is purity. Evil flees from it, it hides itself, it is driven back. Children of light, such must be your influence in this degraded world. Be holy and it will be yours to impart a sanctifying virtue. There is one word in the text to which I would draw attention; it is the word *walk*. "Walk as children of light." Light is never stationary, its very essence is to penetrate everywhere, to be ever active. March on then, draw near to so many of your fellow-men who are living in the darkness of sin.

III.—LIGHT CHEERS. It brings with it consolation and joy. Nothing in nature is more beautiful or more soothing than light. It reveals to us the outward world, and this under a thousand different aspects, each of which has its own particular charm. How oft has the light of the outer world chased sorrow and gloom from our soul! This experience is general. Question the prisoner: speak to that sick man who has lain so long upon a bed of anguish, he will tell you how many peaceful and reassuring thoughts have filled his



soul at sight of a single little star. Yes, light is the element of joy, the emblem of felicity. Christians, that is your symbol !

But notice one important thing. The salutary action of light, however wide its sphere, is exercised *in silence*. It must be so with ours. We must do good without sounding the trumpet before or after us. The manner of doing good often gladdens the heart more than even the good done.

I have endeavoured to show you that to be a child of light is to act upon society as light acts upon the exterior world. It is to enlighten, to purify, to cheer. I have

followed in this the apostle's thought. He himself tells us that the fruits of light are goodness, righteousness, and truth. In fact, it is truth that enlightens, righteousness that purifies, goodness that comforts and cheers. Goodness, justice, righteousness, all the Gospel is here. On one side all the doctrine, on the other all the morals, joined and mingled in the one Divine ray, as light and warmth in the light of the sun. If we walk on earth as children of light, we shall hereafter be the heirs of light in glory.

A. DECOPPET, B.D.

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“The sun is by the firmament surrounded with gorgeous service, tempered by mediatorial ministries ; by the firmament of clouds the temple is built for his presence to fill with light at noon ; by the firmament of clouds the purple veil is closed at evening round the sanctuary of his rest ; by the mists of the firmament his inplacable light is divided, and its separated fierceness appeased into the soft blue that fills the depth of distance with its bloom, and the flush with which the mountains turn as they drink the overflowing of the dayspring. And in this tabernacling of the unendurable sun with men through the shadow of the firmament, God would seem to set forth the stooping of His own majesty to men, upon the throne of the firmament. As the Creator of all the world, and the Inhabiter of Eternity, we cannot behold Him ; but, as the Judge of the earth and the Preserver of men, those heavens are indeed His dwelling place. And all those passings to and fro of fruitful showers and grateful shade, and all those visions of silver palaces built about the horizon, and voices of moaning winds and threatening thunders, and glories of coloured robe and cloven ray, are but to deepen in our hearts the acceptance and distinctness and dearness of the simple words, “ Our Father, which art in heaven.”

RUSKIN.

## Breviaries.

### The Fourth Beatitude.

“BLESSED ARE THEY WHO DO HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS, FOR THEY SHALL BE FILLED.—*Matthew v. 6.*”

I.—THE VASTNESS AND INTENSITY OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE. It is hunger and thirst. (1) Here is a suggestion of the vastness. Hunger and thirst are the primitive appetites ; they cover life, and all developments are from these. (2) In the same way we perceive the intensity of the religious life. Hunger and thirst are, after all, the intensest of our natural desires ; everything will finally give way to them. Starvation and thirst will obtain quicker and more universal sympathy than any other misfortunes that may befall us. But with the same intensity do we long for God ? “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.” The agonies of remorse and of an outraged conscience are far worse than those of starvation. II.—THE GLORY of the religious life. In our physical life we assimilate the strength and power of what we feed on : its nature is absorbed into ours. In our activity we give forth again the strength and power we have received. In the same way do our spirits live upon God : He inspires us : He sustains our souls. The nature of God becomes our nature, and we become children of God : partakers of His life : heirs of His immortality. The Holy Spirit of God lives in us : the full perennial glory of His life begins to shine in us. III.—THE PROGRESSIVENESS of the religious life. Our text says, blessed are they who hunger and thirst, not blessed are they who are full and satisfied : blessed are they who are yearning and desiring, not blessed are they who are quiet and contented. No one who has had a vision of the glory of God can be satisfied with a mere life on earth. The glory of God is infinite ; the glory we have attained to is very finite. There is always something above us. There is a sense in which we never rest. The soul that is seeking after God has always a feeling of dissatisfaction. O that our souls may know a Divine disquietude ; O that an angel from God may trouble our spirits, for blessed are they who *hunger* and *thirst* after righteousness. IV.—THE SATISFACTION of the religious life. “They shall be filled.” At our best and highest moments, when we have the clearest vision of God’s infinite righteousness and purity, how impossible this seems ! There is a sense in which we may easily see the truth of our Lord’s words. Probably exhaustion and death from hunger and thirst were more frequent

then in Palestine than now amongst us. Food and drink were sometimes scarce. But God is ever near us : those who yearn after God shall never know that utter exhaustion that leads to misery and death. We think Christ meant our entire union with God. Christ spoke of a water that He could give, which if a man drank he would never thirst again. Physically we know of no such draught, except a draught of poison. Death is the rest of the flesh ; immortality is the rest of the spirit. To this mysterious consummation of life, hid in the wisdom and love of God, Christ referred.

ISLEWORTH.

T. TRAVERS SHERLOCK, B.A.

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### A Protest against Laziness.—A New Year's Address to Young Men.

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“A SLOTHFUL MAN HIDETH HIS HAND IN HIS BOSOM, AND WILL NOT SO MUCH AS BRING IT TO HIS MOUTH AGAIN.”—*Proverbs* xix. 24.

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Most critics substitute the word *dish* for “bosom” here. “A slothful man hideth his hand in his dish.” This certainly makes the description of the lazy man more graphic. His repast is provided for him ; it is spread before him, but he is too lazy to take it : he drops his hand in the dish. He is not only too lazy to earn his food by honest labour, and to prepare it for his own use, but, when it is there, he is almost too indolent to raise it to his mouth. He who is “slow at meat is slow at work.” Indolence becomes more and more strong as it is yielded to. Sloth in some natures is nursed to a sovereignty. The less a man exerts himself the more indisposed he becomes to exertion, until at last the slightest effort becomes a felt inconvenience. This laziness may be seen in different departments of life. I.—IN WORLDLY CONCERNS. There are men before whom Providence has brought the “dish,” containing all the conditions of affluence and social prosperity, but the man is too lazy to put his hand to it. He sits and yawns and says, “It is time enough to begin.” Laziness has brought many a man, who might have been in affluence, to wretched pauperism. It may be seen II.—IN INTELLECTUAL MATTERS. The “dish” of knowledge is laid before a lazy man ; he has books, leisure, money, everything in fact to enable him to enrich his mind with knowledge, and train his faculties for distinguished work in the realm of science, but he is too lazy. His mind becomes enfeebled and diseased for the want of exercise. It may be seen III.—IN SPIRITUAL INTERESTS. Gospel provisions are laid before the lazy man. There are the “unsearchable riches of Christ ;” there is the “crown of glory,” but he is too indolent

to make any exertion to participate in the heavenly blessings. "Go thy way for this time," he says, "and when I have a convenient season I will send for thee." Pollock has well described the indolent soul:—

"Sloth lay till mid-day, turning on his couch,  
Like ponderous door upon its weary hinge,  
And having rolled him out, with much ado  
And many a dismal sigh and vain attempt,  
He sauntered out, accoutred carelessly,  
With half-op'd, misty, unobservant eye,  
Somniferous, that weighed the object down  
On which its burden fell an hour or two,  
Then, with a groan, retired to rest again."

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

### Man's Sin.

"I ACKNOWLEDGE MY TRANSGRESSIONS," &c.—*Psalm li. 3.*

WE infer: I.—THAT A MAN'S SINS ARE HIS IN A SENSE THAT CANNOT BE AFFIRMED OF ANYTHING ELSE HE CALLS HIS OWN. Over all other things which are said to belong to him his possession is but technical. David seems to have felt the full force of this truth, for he says in this confession of his,—"*my transgressions,*" "*my sin.*" A man's sins are his because they are (1) *Generated by himself.* He is the parent, they are his offspring. They are (2) *Like himself.* This is quite natural. Sin represents thought. Every transgression and every sin committed was once a thought in the mind of the man who is guilty of it. A sinful act is an outward expression of the unseen mind and heart. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." Hence we affirm he is (3) *Himself chargeable with the consequences.* The consequences of sin might have been prevented if the author had not let the thought go over into his practice. II.—THAT A MAN WHO IS GUILTY OF SIN IS EVER ANNOYED BY AN ENEMY WHO CONFRONTS HIM. This is (1) *A grim fact.* Illustrated by (a) *The upraidings of conscience*; (b) *The unbidden recollections of the past*; (c) *the tyranny of habit*; (d) *the force of example.* This may be, to say the least of it, a source of (2) *Unrest for the present.* It is torture for a man to be compelled to face his sins in this way, but it may be a decided (3) *Advantage in the future.* There can be no doubt as to this advantage if it makes a man feel his (a) *Individual responsibility,* and induces him to be (b) *Reconciled to God.* III.—THAT THE STRENGTH OF A MAN'S SIN CANNOT BE DESTROYED UNLESS HE WILL COMPLY WITH THE CONDITIONS OF DIVINE SALVATION. What are these? (1) *Confession.* "I acknowledge," &c. (2) *Abandonment of sin.* (3) *Trust in Christ.* His mission is "to put away sin."

DISS.

R. HEBRON.



## Pulpit Handmaids.

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### The Unity of the Church.

To everyone who desires to see the unity of the Church an accomplished fact, the signs of the times are full of encouragement. Never was the spirit of Christ more powerful as the inspiration of His disciples, and never were more hopeful the tokens of a gathering of the sects around His Cross. True, things that are non-essential are still maintained as barriers between one Church and another, blinding them to each other's virtues, hindering their co-operation, and thereby weakening their power as the redeeming agencies of the world. But, already, undermining influences are at work, and to the question which so painfully exercises the minds of many devout and earnest Christians, "How can the sundered sections of the Church be brought into closer and more vital relationship?" the true answer is even now being given.

To every one who believes that Christianity is larger than a sect, and who longs for the day when sectarian strifes and jealousies will be unknown, the welcome so generously accorded by many of the clergymen of Bristol to the members of the Congregational Union assembled in their city, and to which reference was made in the pages of the previous number of this magazine, is one of the most significant signs of the times. It shews that the Churches recognise each other's value and appreciate each other's work, and that in the heart of the great historical Church of this country there is a growing and deepening desire to draw nearer to the Churches that lie outside her pale, to co-operate with them in spreading the truths of the Gospel of Christ, in lessening the world's sorrow, and diminishing the world's sin. It may be long before that desire is realized, yet, though the hand of time may linger in its revolution, we believe that the hour will strike when the Churches of Christendom will shew by their active co-operation and sympathy how they can be one in Christ.

And not the least hopeful feature of that reception was the clear and frank avowal—the avowal on both sides—of loyalty to the principles which both represent. There was no weak or sentimental talk about reaching union by the "obliteration of ancient landmarks," but an honest acknowledgment that there were differences which would keep them separate, and yet an acknowledgment that, in spite of these differences, they could meet each other as disciples of the same Master, and stand shoulder to shoulder as they wielded the weapons of the Spirit against all forms of misery,

unbelief, and sin. That is one of the most cheering features of that reception, for it points, not to the wild dream of uniformity which can only become a reality at the cost of human character, but to that unity which will one day be realized on earth as now it is realized in heaven.

It is in this direction, and in this direction alone, it seems to us, that we must look for unity. So long as there is diversity of gifts, so long there will be diversity of operations; so long as men can see but a section of the truth of God, so long there will be the sectional Church to represent the truth they see. On this point it is important that we should be clear, especially when regard is had to the declaration, that is not infrequently made, that both the Church and the world would be the better for the abolition of sectarian distinctions.

The true and natural order of all intellectual and spiritual progress—and the true measure of it—is to be found in diversity rather than in sameness. There may be the most perfect agreement of opinion in reference to the facts which lie in the outer region of a human life, but in reference to the truths which come within the sweep of the inner, that agreement is an impossibility. The peculiarities of our character tone and limit all our spiritual perception, and are reflected in the character of our thought. Men do not think alike, nor do they see alike. Each goes to God in his own way; sees an aspect of the truth which may be very precious to him, and yet an aspect whose meaning may be dwarfed and shrunken to another. In the sphere that lies outside the reach of all our calculations, where our conceptions of God and of Divine truth are coloured by our own personality, it is impossible to conceive of a unity that would not be utterly destructive of human character and identity.

And if here there cannot be unity, it is as unwise to desire it without as it is perilous to attempt to create it. Better, infinitely better, that the outward and inward order should run parallel with each other. A manufactured unity is only a disguised dissension, and sooner or later the disguise will be stripped away. It is as true of nations as it is of the Church,—outward uniformity cannot exist apart from inward unity. National instincts, the peculiar and subtle influences of race, again and again break up the violent and artificial attempts that are made at national community. Great empires extend their territories and centralize their energies, yet working through them is a disintegrating force which is mightier than all outward authority, and which announces, often-times in the thunder of the field of battle, that national life must be based on national instincts and sympathies, on powers with which no imperial government can cope. And in religious communities the same influences

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are at work. The inner spirit cleaves asunder the outward form, shatters the external uniformity, and makes its proclamation to all who have ears to hear, that uniformity means stagnation, and stagnation death.

We would not, therefore, lament what are regarded as the "heresies and schisms" of the Church; rather would we rejoice in them. They are at least proofs of vitality. Wherever there is life there will be conflict and diversity. Death is the only region that is distinguished by an unquestioned uniformity. Diversity is the law of progress, and every powerful religious organization—the Church of Rome, the Church of England, Methodism—is a living illustration of it. Those who grieve over the divisions of the Church, should grieve, rather, over the lack of charity by which they have been marked, and should remember that *indifference* is the terrible alternative to difference, and that over *that* they would lament more bitterly. Whatever be the weaknesses and disadvantages—and they may be many—of sectarian organizations, of "heresies and schisms," surely the activity of life is infinitely more desirable than the hopeless slumber of a paralysed and pulseless faith, the cries and agony and conflicts of deep and passionate conviction than the bleak and barren wastes of spiritual death!

But though there cannot be uniformity there may at least be union: though unity of dogmatic expression, of order, and of methods, cannot be obtained without the sacrifice of power and inspiration, there may be the unity of the Spirit, and the separated sections of the Church may acknowledge their brotherhood in Christ.

In minor matters the Church may be divided, in the deepest it may be one. Theology, viewed as a system of doctrine, inevitably finds its way into a thousand channels: religion, viewed as the power of a Christlike life, moves only in two directions—upwards towards God, and downwards towards man. We would not depreciate the value of doctrine—it is necessary to a strong, earnest, and noble Christian life—but there is something that asks from us a deeper reverence, and that is the faith itself—the faith that unites men in strong and tender relations to the Lord, and that binds them with "closer links of lovingness" to each other; the faith that inspires with the Spirit of Christ the humblest of His sons and that glorifies the earth with the charity of heaven. That is a faith whose splendours will never be eclipsed. Systems of theology are necessarily human conceptions of the Divine word; creeds are human compositions marked by the imperfections which characterize all human work, and expressed in language which some may understand, about which many will dispute; methods of government and forms of worship are

human arrangements in which there is nothing specially inspired, and in all these modifications will inevitably be made as the growing intelligence and clearer spiritual apprehension of mankind, demands methods better suited to its need, and discerns the truths which now we but dimly see. But whatever changes may be made in the outer forms which faith may take, the faith itself, the Light and Love born into the world's heart from Calvary, will grow the more radiant and subduing as the ages move. And wherever that Light and Love have touched a human heart and wrought themselves into a human life; wherever they find expression, in work, in worship, or in prayer, there is a voice to which we should listen with reverent ears, and which we can only ignore as we are deaf to the commands of the simplest Christian duty, or, as we are faithless to our faith. And is it not here where union becomes possible—in the glad and willing recognition that “God fulfils Himself in many ways,” leading men by various avenues to the “house of many mansions,” through the diversities of earth to the diversities of heaven? Is it not here where the sects may reach forth hands of charity across every dividing gulf, as they make their confession that they have “one Lord, one faith, one baptism?”

To all who long for the coming of the day when the “unity of the Spirit shall be kept in the bond of peace,” when in the varying notes that make up the harmony of the Church there shall be no sound of discord, and Christ shall take possession of His own, the present outlook, in spite of all its shadows, is alight with hope. Already the beams of the brighter day are pulsating and trembling in the firmament of the Church. The power of Christ is mightier to-day, as the uniting and inspiring energy of the sects, than ever it has been in days gone by, and His Spirit is laying a stronger hold on all the denominations of the world. It is not, as many fear, that principles are held more loosely; it is that they are held more lovingly. Never was loyalty to the truth so constant and so firm: never was loyalty to charity so tender and so deep. If any man doubt it, he has but to compare present controversies with past, or the experience of the Church to-day with that of the distant centuries in respect to its possession and practice of faith, charity, brotherhood. The words of Christ never throbbed more powerfully to inspire the members of His Church, and His Cross never touched the world with such healing and uplifting power. Nobler theories concerning human nature, and a nobler practice concerning the brotherhood of man; charity for the mind that wanders and goes astray as it feels and gropes after completer views of God, and death for the deceits and treacheries that



would disfigure and obliterate the Divine image on the human soul ; faith in Christ, who came not to save a sect, but a world, and consecration to Christ more commanding than consecration to a fragment of His Church—these are the signs of that kingdom of God which to-day is breaking upon the world. The drift of the world's thought, in spite of all its eddyings, is not away from Christ, but toward larger, kinder, juster views of His teaching and life and work. The lines of the opposing principles which separate the Churches that make the Church, are not growing less distinct, but the Spirit of Christ is operating more powerfully through them all.

And the denominations cannot draw nearer to Christ without drawing nearer to each other. Growing into His mind and heart, they grow in the charity that lights up the heavens and rains its benedictions on the world—the charity that attracts and unites, that never sunders or repels. The lines of their progress lie not parallel, but converge ; and however widely they may have been separated at the beginning, the Cross is the angle at which they meet at last. The subordinate truths fall into the shade and the greater truth becomes more controlling and august, until at length their differences cease to be divisions, and they become one in heart and purpose in Jesus Christ. It is not that one denomination subdues and overwhelms the rest ; it is Christ subduing and overwhelming all.

And when the sects have learned, as they are learning now, to place the true value on all non-essential things, to keep them in their place, to use them as a means of progress and not as hindrances to co-operation and sympathy, they will approach each other not by any sacrifice of opinion, not on the fields of fierce and unchristian debate, but on the higher level of Christian brotherhood. Then the bitterness will be dissolved out of sectarian controversies, and the Protestant will no longer regard the Catholic, and the Catholic the Protestant, the Churchman the Dissenter, and the Dissenter the Churchman with a feeling which, whatever index it may be of the character of his rival's faith, is at least sadly convincing of the character of his own. Then the gospel will appeal to the world with more piercing and persuasive power, and the prayer of Christ for His disciples—the prayer which He prays still—will hasten to its fulfilment, “that they all may be one, even as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.” Then there will not be uniformity but that which is vastly more to be desired, “the unity of the Spirit kept in the bond of peace.”

GLOUCESTER.

HENRY SHAW.

## ZOOLOGICAL PARABLES.

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"GATHER UP THE FRAGMENTS."—*John* vi. 12.

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## No. IV.

**The Beasts of the Field and the Fowls of the Air.**

IN the last paper we treated of the Fly and the Beetle as subordinate agents in doing the work of the world. In our country these are quite sufficient for the purpose, and, consequently, no others are needed.

There is an old saying that "extremes meet," and this is well exemplified in the subject now before us. The pure savage and the highly-civilized European are at one upon the subject of waste.

The savage does not waste food.

He lives but from hand to mouth, and though he may gorge himself to an extent which we should feel inclined to deprecate, he never throws away an atom of anything that can be eaten. Even the Esquimaux, who is but one grade above a savage, wastes no food. He lives mostly on seals, and when he kills one of these animals he makes use of every portion. He drinks the blood before it has time to cool, he eats the flesh and even the entrails raw, he saves the skins for clothing and the bones for pointing his spears and arrows.

Now we pass to the opposite extreme, namely, our own country.

When we kill an ox we separate it into various portions, each of which can be converted to some useful purpose, and, therefore, can be sold. Or, if a horse or an ass dies, every part of it can be used for the service of man, and so, although the flesh may not be used for human food, it can be utilized as food for dogs and cats, and so aids to save the food of man, with which these animals must otherwise have been nourished. Even its bones help the agriculturalist in producing food for man by being ground to powder and mixed with the soil of the corn-fields.

But the imperfectly civilized man is the most improvident of beings.

A North American Indian will kill a bison for its skin. Having flayed the animal he will, perhaps, cut off the "hump" for food, and then leave the rest of the carcass on the ground. How many thousand of these animals are thus wasted annually it is impossible to say.

Then, take the European elephant hunters of Africa. They kill the animal almost wholly for the sake of its tusks and teeth, and having secured them leave the huge carcass to decay. Similarly the rhinoceros is killed for its horn, and the hippopotamus for its curved teeth, and so forth, the carcass being left to waste.

It is true that the savage tribes which inhabit Southern Africa are only too glad to find the dead animals which the hunter has shot, but the man who shot them cares nothing for the carcass as far as he is concerned. Even when the savages do consume every part of the animal which is eatable, they are forced to abandon the bones, for which they can find no use.

Now, in the East, where Europeans have not been rulers, waste is the invariable custom through life. If an animal dies in a town its carcass is simply flung into the street and left there. When butchers dress their meat the offal is similarly treated, the genuine Oriental not possessing the most elementary ideas of sanitation.

So, lest this wasted animal matter should become decomposed and poison the atmosphere, man is not allowed to have his own lazy way to his own hurt. Another set of sub-agents is, therefore, appointed, which may be classed under the two titles which head this article.

The "beasts of the field" are, firstly, the dogs, which simply swarm in every town throughout the East, and, like human scavengers, these animals have even divided their towns into districts of their own formation, and these boundaries they guard so jealously that if a dog belonging to one district should trespass into another he would be torn to pieces and devoured.

The Eastern dogs have nothing to eat except the offal or

carriage which is thrown into the streets. Consequently they are always half-starved, and if even a bone should be flung into the road a dozen dogs will be fighting for it almost before it has touched the ground. If the dead body of a man were left in the street at night, scarcely a vestige of it could be found in the morning.

Then, there are the "fowls of the air," *i.e.* the vultures. "Wherever the carcass is, there will the vultures be gathered together."

They have the faculty of detecting a dead animal at a wonderful distance, guided either by sight or by scent, or by both, or—what is more likely—by some sense which is not possessed by man because he does not need it, and which would be wasted if it were given to him. Most carnivorous animals are repelled by putridity, but it is not so with the vultures. On the contrary, they are attracted by it, and the more noisome the stench that proceeds from the decaying carcass, the more they are gratified with it.

Yet another step.

The vultures cannot deal with bones, their beaks being much too feeble to crush even the rib of a sheep. The dogs can manage to break up and to eat these ribs and other smaller bones, but the skull and large bones of the legs are too much for them.

But, now comes another of these specially appointed sub-agents, namely, the hyæna. He is expressly made for the purpose of removing these larger bones, and very effectually does he perform his task. Let me advise my readers, when they visit any menagerie, to induce the keeper to give a hyæna the large leg bone of a horse or ox. The animal takes the bone in his mouth and, without apparent effort, crushes it into fragments. The bone cracks like the report of a pistol, and the splinters fly about in every direction.

Neither the wild dog, the wolf, the vulture, nor the hyæna are found in this country now. But, in former days, all four were inhabitants of England, because they were wanted. England was then a wild country, made up of forest, swamp, and



moor, and inhabited by men who were only a few steps in advance of savagery. Wild cattle roamed the land, and when they died their carcasses would have cumbered the earth. So, in order to remove the dead bodies, the "beasts of the field and the fowls of the air" were ready to gather up the fragments.

Now, the vultures and hyænas have been extinct for countless centuries, while the last wolf was destroyed within the time of English history, and the fox only remains on sufferance. They are needed no longer, their work is over, and their place knows them no more.

J. G. WOOD, M.A., F.L.S.

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THOMAS CARLYLE ON WAR.—What, speaking in quite unofficial language, is the net purport and upshot of war? To my own knowledge, for example, there dwell and toil, in the British village of Dumdrudge, usually some five hundred souls. From these, by certain "natural enemies" of the French, there are successively selected, during the French war, say thirty able-bodied men. Dumdrudge, at her own expense, has suckled and nursed them; she has not without difficulty and sorrow fed them up to manhood and even trained them to crafts, so that one can weave, another build, another hammer, and the weakest can stand under thirty stone avoirdupois. Nevertheless, amid much weeping and swearing, they are selected; all dressed in red; and shipped away, at the public charge, some two thousand miles, or say only to the south of Spain, and fed there till wanted. And now to that same spot in the south of Spain are thirty similar French artizans, from a French Dumdrudge, in like manner wending, till at length, after infinite effort, the two parties come into actual juxtaposition; and Thirty stands fronting Thirty, each with a gun in his hand. Straightway the word "Fire!" is given, and they blow the souls out of one another; and in place of sixty brisk useful craftsmen, the world has sixty dead carcasses, which it must bury, and anew shed tears for. Had these men any quarrel? Busy as the devil is, not the smallest. They lived far apart; were the entirest strangers; nay, in so wide a Universe, there was even unconsciously, by Commerce, some mutual helpfulness between them. How then? Simpleton! Their governors had fallen out, and instead of shooting one another, had the cunning to make these poor blockheads shoot.

## The Preacher's Passing Bell:

BEING IN MEMORIAM SKETCHES OF MINISTERS RECENTLY DEPARTED.

### ARCHBISHOP TAIT.



IT is scarcely a figure to say that the Church of England bowed as one mourner at the grave of the Archbishop of Canterbury last month in the quiet churchyard at Addington. And it is no figure to say that that mourner, subdued and sincere, was not solitary. The largest hearts in the Churches, of all English-speaking countries at least, sorrowed for that Church's bereavement, and for a yet wider loss. For through the four months of his long wearisome illness he had been again and again remembered in the prayers, not only of his own Communion, but of Roman Catholic and other Non-conformist worshippers, for he was a true "servant of the servants of God."

This anxiety about his illness, and grief for his death, may be explained in the words of one of the thousand tributes of the secular press:—"The Primate we have lost was certainly a great man. Neither a great theologian, nor a great statesman, nor a great Bishop, he was yet a great man, a man of calm and just mind, magnanimous in victory and magnanimous in defeat, genuinely pious, genuinely strong, and genuinely forbearing with those who did not agree with him."

No one supposes that by this death, or by that of any of his ninety-two predecessors, England has lost an ideal Archbishop. He has yet to come. Unimpeachable in Christian character, and consummate in administration, he will also be the leading interpreter of theology to his times, the glowing inspirer of the best enthusiasms of his age, and the princely champion of the catholicity of the whole Church of Christ. Whilst Hope waits for this ideal, Memory has her store of benediction for such an one as we have just lost.

For Archbishop Tait had become a conspicuous and familiar figure, and not less honoured than conspicuous and familiar, in the English life of this half century.

Born in Edinburgh, in 1811, passing from the best schools of his native city to the University of Glasgow, and thence to Baliol College, Oxford, his answer there to Dr. Jenkyns, at that time Master of the College, was prophetic; for the Master said to him "Well, Mr. Tait, what are you come to Oxford for?" "To improve myself, sir, and to make friends." His brilliant career at the University and his friendships formed there, which lasted through life, warranted his reply. It was whilst he was senior tutor of Baliol that he stepped into the arena of the religious thought of the age. For he came prominently before the world as one of the "Four Tutors" who publicly protested against the principles of interpretation of the Thirty-nine Articles laid down by John Henry Newman in his celebrated *Tract for the Times*, No. XC. The next year, 1842, finds him called to succeed the prince of modern schoolmasters, the illustrious Arnold, at Rugby, where he evidenced those elements of personal popularity and practical wisdom which in every succeeding sphere of his life continued to distinguish him. Notwithstanding the rare difficulty of following such a predecessor, Mr. Tait succeeded in main

taining and bequeathing the best traditions of that great School. During his life there he met and married Catherine Spooner, a wife whose character, abilities, and sorrows give her an unusual share in the life and fame of her husband. In 1850 he accepted the deanery of Carlisle, and it must not be forgotten that he was about the first of "active" Deans, using his office as a sacred opportunity alike for evangelistic effort and ecclesiastical usefulness. Six years afterwards he was consecrated Bishop of London, and it soon became plain that he had but enlarged his sphere of arduous and beneficent work. "For his spirited efforts to carry the light of the gospel into the dark dwellings of the poor of London, and to secure the erection of at least one place of worship in each district of every parish of London, and, above all, for the plain-spoken zeal with which he placed this work as a duty—neither more nor less—before the wealthy classes of this great metropolis, he deserved and secured the gratitude of all religious men, whatever their opinions might be. The result of his earnest appeal to the wealthier classes of the metropolis was the commencement of a large annual subscription called the Bishop of London's Fund, which in the first five years of its existence raised a sum of nearly £350,000 for the erection of churches, schools, and parsonages in the poorer suburbs of the metropolis; called into being above seventy new districts, which have rapidly developed into separate and endowed parishes; and to say nothing of a whole army of Scripture Readers and Mission Women, had the effect of adding some hundred clergymen to the permanent working staff of the diocese, before the elevation of its author to the archiepiscopal chair." In 1868, having some years previously declined the Archbishopric of York, he became Archbishop of Canterbury; and, in view of his devotion to his mission, and the spirit in which, whether in the affairs of the Province, or of such gatherings as the Pan Anglican Synod or the House of Peers, he fulfilled the obligations of that work, he will probably be recognised as the greatest occupant of the Chair of Anselm since Tillotson.

Of his character, in its more public aspects, we have already indicated some principal features. Not so brilliant as many of his contemporaries—as Robertson or Wilberforce, Kingsley or Stanley—his solid goodness was as conspicuous as that of any of them. Gazing thoughtfully at his rigid firmness in essentials and his sympathetic toleration in smaller matters, at his willing toil in his manifold labours, and his victorious patience in repeated and harrowing sorrows, we feel the one word which best describes his character is—Harmony. This was largely so, no doubt, because his life, which, in many respects, was one of rapid prosperity, did not lack the regulator of Adversity. The action of sanctified sorrow, doubtless, did its staying, checking, and balancing work. Dr. Vaughan speaks of the Archbishop's life as "having emerged in a chastened splendour" after it had been "cleft in twain" by the loss of five dearly loved children in three weeks, but only to be again "shattered by desolating bereavements;" and, he adds, that it was within his own knowledge that his protracted and painful illness, so patiently endured throughout, had been "one long prayer." Of that illness much might be said. Beginning in August, through his discharge of a duty when he was physically unfit, it passed through many alternations, in the hopes and fears of those who watched him. But from the commencement he felt he was going to die, and did not desire life. The five little daughters carried from him when scarlet fever devastated his Carlisle home; his only son Craufurd, who had died on the bright threshold of a youthful ministry; his wife, whose loss he seems

poignantly to have realized during the four years since her death, all led him to look eagerly to that strange dawn, when—

“With the morn, those angel faces smile,  
Which we have loved long since and lost awhile.”

Advent Sunday, 1882, the fourth anniversary of his wife's death, brought him the advent of Him who has the keys of death.

“Hath he not always treasures, always friends,  
The good great man? three treasures, love and light,  
And calm thoughts regular as infant's breath;  
And three firm friends more sure than day and night,  
Himself, his Maker, and the angel Death.”

Archbishop Tait's influence was, from the vantage ground of his office, far-reaching. To attempt to measure it, or indeed any man's, is to undertake the impossible. Wherever we trace it—in home, or society, or Church—we recognise his affectionateness, his purity, his fidelity. In its wider sphere that influence was, with but few exceptions, distinctly liberal. Belonging to no party in the Church of England, he would have made her almost as broad as Tillotson, to whom Dean Stanley compared him, could have desired. His own wise words were, “I believe that the best men of the time have a dislike to all ‘schools of theology’. They desire a religion which shall serve them and their neighbours in life and in death without tying them up to unnatural phrases, or working up their faith, whether they will or no, in the stocks of some antiquated system of discipline.” And the spirit of these words, working in one direction, led him to refuse to vote for the Synodical condemnation of the “Essays and Reviews,” and to resist the attempts made, in the Upper House of Convocation, to procure the deposition of Bishop Colenso; in another to send a gift towards the Mission work of the Salvation Army; in another, to dictate, from his dying room, a message of congratulation at the visit of the Bristol Clergy to the Assembly of the Congregational Union; in another to write recommending Mr. Mackonochie to the Bishop of London's good offices.

“He sleeps well.” Many hands have already laid their wreaths on his grave. The Dean of St. Paul's says, “He made his place, whatever may be thought of the result, what it had hardly been for a long period before. Under that stately and reserved demeanour there was really great warmth of heart and great kindness. Where he loved he loved strongly. His religion, his devotion, was serious, genuine, sincere.” The Bishop of Manchester tells how “you felt yourself in the presence of a man who commanded respect by the simple power of his great qualities. Persuasive, statesmanlike, far-seeing, courageous, but not uncomplaining (save where the interests of vital truth were concerned, and then he would yield, no not for an hour), he was a very type of a Christian prelate, suited to the age in which God's Providence placed him.” No tribute is worth more than the words that, like the offering of a simple white flower, were with loyal enthusiasm uttered by the Dean of Llandaff to his memory, “He was first a true Christian, then a great Bishop.”



## Correspondence Page.

[*Enquiries or Answers will be inserted here concerning Books, or about Texts suitable for Special Occasions, or as to Sermons on given Verses or Topics. Brief letters on any matter that pertains to the work of the Gospel Preacher or Student will also be welcomed.*]

### ANSWERS.

#### FAITH-HEALING.

Further Replies to Questions about Faith-Healing are postponed.

#### THE DETAILS OF "GOOD SAMARITAN PARABLE."

Will some reader kindly send us an answer to Enquirer's query in our last number.

### QUESTIONS.

#### THE TREE OF LIFE AND THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE.

Having raised the question, in *The Homilist*, of the true interpretation of the 2nd Chapter of Genesis in the instance of the creation of Eve, we propose to raise further inquiry in regard to the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Are they to be understood literally?

By way of finding the answer to this question, let me enquire what is the Scripture usage?

The first reference to the tree of life is in Genesis ii. 9; the next reference is in chapter iii. 22, where the result of eating it is declared to be that the eater should "live for ever." Is this to be understood spiritually, as similar words used by Christ are universally so understood, when he says (John vi. 51) "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." In every other case in Scripture the expression "tree of life" is used metaphorically. Of wisdom Solomon says (Prov. iii. 18) "She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her." Compare chapter xi. 30, where he says that "the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life." In the Book of Revelation the spiritual use of the expression is direct and clear. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (ii. 7); and in the 22nd chapter "the tree of life" occurs once and again (verses 2 and 14) as contributing to the blessedness of the new Jerusalem.

Does it not seem more intelligible and more in harmony with Scripture usage, in its endeavour to represent spiritual facts under figure of the visible, to understand the expression figuratively? The writer having spoken of the trees of the garden, adds, with subtle significance, as Christ often used words whose spiritual meaning was not perceived, "the tree of life also in the midst of the garden." The narrative is so brief, and there is no living voice by its tones to aid us, that we are left with our spiritual perception alone to help us to interpret the author's meaning.

By a parity of reasoning the expression of "the tree of knowledge, of good and evil," whose use is confined to the 2nd and 3rd chapters of Genesis, may be shown capable of a spiritual interpretation.

We again put the matter as an inquiry, because we do not at present see anything, except greater probability, which fixes the interpretation suggested, as the true one.

T. D.

#### ENQUIRY FOR AUTHOR OF T. L. HARRIS'S SERMONS.

Can any of your readers give me the address of the Rev. T. L. Harris, formerly of New York, and author of "Truth and Life in Jesus," "The Millennial Age," &c., or inform me where his works may be obtained?

H. S.

## Reviews.

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**HOMILETICS.** By J. M. HOPPIN, Professor at Yale College. London: Nisbet and Co., Berners Street.

So many volumes have of late years appeared on this subject, and not a few from those who have no distinguished qualification for the work, that we have almost ceased to feel interest in such productions. Thinking men are beginning to feel (what should never have been lost sight of) that true gospel preaching is not a science nor a profession; it is nothing but a natural talking out to our fellow men of those burning convictions concerning gospel facts which are of the most urgent importance to all. A man who has to narrate a fact of thrilling interest does not want rules, one who has to proclaim a danger that overwhelms him with dread, does not think of methods of doing it. Give a man a burning thought, and his nature will instinctively find the most effective way of conveying it. His eyes will flash, his tones will penetrate, his whole frame will quiver with electric force. Hence it turns out that the men who are the most ignorant of what is called homiletical science and rhetorical arts, are the most effective preachers throughout Christendom. We are not disparaging education nor advocating what has been called an ignorant ministry. But sermons composed after the best methods are amongst the dullest things in our literature; and sermons delivered in the most accomplished style are amongst the most somnific of human vocalisations. Hence men who will crowd theatres and halls of debate and of scientific instruction, and devour books of almost all kinds, eschew scenes of professional preaching and leave sermonic literature to rot on the shelves of second-hand booksellers. Why this? Simply because professional preaching *has been a mistake*, it is unnatural, out of keeping both with the spirit and example of the Great Master Teacher, who simply talked to the people on the mountain brow, on the sea shore, and on sailing skiffs. Talking is a natural function. If you would make the talk mighty, let the theme of the talker burn within him. There is nothing within the whole range of human experience so enlightening and so charming as right good talk. The records of such talk we always hail and heartily recommend. He who promotes such talkers, by imparting useful knowledge, by suggesting thoughts that will rouse the intellect, set the wheels of thought a-going and fire the soul with sympathies with Christ and spiritual humanity, renders to his race, perhaps, the highest service of all services.

In saying all this we must not forget to record our conviction that the book before us is, as compared to many of its class, of superior merit. It is divided into two parts; the first part treats of "Homiletics Proper," in which, in the first division, we have the history of preaching, in the second, the object of preaching, in the third, preparation of preaching, in the fourth, analysis of sermons, in the fifth, classification of sermons. In the second part we have Rhetoric applied to preaching, &c. The author is a man who proves himself to possess distinguished qualifications for the work he has undertaken, although, as we have already intimated, such a work proceeds on the assumption that preaching is a profession, like law, medicine, or music, whereas it is nothing more than telling out with glowing sympathies the stories of a wonderful life.

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**THE PARALLEL NEW TESTAMENT:** being the Authorised Version set forth in 1611, arranged in parallel columns with the Revised Version of 1881. Oxford University Press.

This small edition contains all that the former, which we noticed in a previous number, does. It is beautifully "got up" and every attendant at Church or Chapel should have a copy in his pew.

**BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.** By Dr. BERNHARD WEISS. Translated by Rev. DAVID EATON, M.A., Vol. I. **CHRISTIAN ETHICS.** Special Part; Social Ethics. By Dr. H. MARTENSEN, Translated by SOPHIA TAYLOR. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 38, George Street.

**BIBLICAL THEOLOGY.**—This is the third edition of this work. The volume consists of an introduction in which we have the problem of the science, division and arrangement, investigation of sources, method of the representation, the origin of the science, earlier works on Biblical Theology, the more recent works, auxiliary labours. The work is divided into three parts; the first part treats of the teaching of Jesus according to the earliest tradition; the second part of the original apostolic type of doctrine previous to the time of Paul; and the third of Paulinism. To all those interested in what is called theologic science, this work will have great interest. We regard it as one of the best issues of *Clark's Foreign Theological Library*.

**CHRISTIAN ETHICS.** This is a second volume of the author's work. It embraces a large number of topics. Under the heading of the family we have—The Family and the Moral World, Monogamous Marriage, Celibacy, Contraction of Marriage, Married Life, Mixed Marriages, Second Marriage, Divorce, The Emancipation of Woman, Family Life and Affection, Parents and Children, Masters and Servants, Hospitality, Friendship, and Sociability. Under the heading of the State we have treated—The State and Justice, The National State, The Christian State, The State and the Civic Government, The Common Weal, Politico-Economic Individualism, Utopian and Revolutionary Socialism, Ethical Socialism, The State and Public Morality, Transgression and Punishment, The Constitution, Civil Virtue, Public Opinion, Differences between the Government and the People, and War. Under the title of the ideal tastes of culture we have chapters on Art, Science, and the School. Under the subject of the Church we have Articles on—The Church and the Kingdom of God, The Church and Humanity, The Congregation and the Ministry, Edification in Public Worship, The Sunday, Special Pastoral Care, Foreign and Home Missions, The Relation to other Confessions, The Relation to the State. Under the heading of the Consummation of the Kingdom of God, there are chapters on—The Great Apostacy and the Anti-Christ, The Golden Age, and Waiting for the Day of the Lord. Many of the conclusions in this volume we are bound to repudiate. The author seems to assume throughout that the principle of eternal right is something outside of God, and to which God Himself must bow. To us God Himself is the right, and the right is love, and God is love. The author not only vindicates Capital Punishment, War, &c., but even advocates these enormities. Notwithstanding all, however, the volume is fraught with most valuable information, and reveals much learning and profound thought.

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**THE GALILEAN GOSPEL.** By Rev. Professor BRUCE, D.D. Edinburgh: Macniven and Wallace, Princes Street.

With the spirit and purpose of this book, as expressed by its able author, we have the most intense and growing sympathy. "My aim has been to convey as vivid an idea as possible of the Gospel Christ preached, and above all of the evangelic spirit as reflected in His teaching and life. I believe that this will meet a want of our time, and will be welcomed by many. While there is little in the actual Christianity of our day, or in the state of the Churches, to awaken enthusiasm, it is rest-giving to go back to the beginning of the Christian era, and to drink of the pure wells of truth opened in Galilee, in the days of the Son of Man. Reflecting on the baleful controversies of centuries, and the tragic divisions resulting therefrom, on the theological schools and their conflicting oracles, the sigh involuntarily escapes from the breast, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove, that I might fly away to Jesus of Nazareth, and forget the windy storms of human opinions and passions!" This does not disappoint the weary heart. In His

teaching is eternal wisdom : in Himself perennial beauty. . . . The Evangelists or Gospels have for their burthen the ministry of Christ. That ministry is the Gospel in its purity and Divine poetic simplicity. That, therefore, is the source whence our notions of evangelic truth and piety must in the first place be taken. It will be well for the Church to remount to that source, and to have her ideas of Christianity rectified by that standard, and her intuitions restored where they have become obscured through the moss of ages. When this has been done it will be acknowledged that evangelic piety does not belong exclusively to a sect, or theological school, but is Catholic and unsectarian." The subjects which Dr. Bruce treats here are entitled, "Beginning from Galilee, The Acceptable Year of the Lord, The Beatitudes, Much Forgiveness much Love, The Joy of Finding Things Lost, The Sympathy of Christ, The Power of Faith, The Vicarious Virtue of Faith, Christ the Great Innovator, The Joy of the Jesus Circle, The Evangelic Spirit." We most heartily recommend this little book to the attention of all ministers.

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THE PRIMITIVE METHODIST QUARTERLY REVIEW, for October, 1882. THE PRIMITIVE METHODIST MAGAZINE. THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER. THE TEACHER'S ASSISTANT. THE JUVENILE MAGAZINE. THE CHILD'S FRIEND. September, October, and November Numbers. London : Ralph Fenwick, Commercial Road.

There was a time when not only the Church of England, but most of the Non-conformist sects looked with a supercilious eye and spoke with patronising tones of the Primitive Methodist body. That time is gone, or nearly so. They are not a whit behind any of the sects in most respects, and before them in some. Numerically they are the most increasing, religiously they are among the most earnest, and intellectually they are coming to the front. The list of their organs quoted above is sufficient evidence of this. Their *Quarterly Review*, now in our hands, will bear a comparison with the *London Review*, and in literary merit and weight will not be excelled by the *Quarterly* claimed by the Congregational body, whilst its circulation, we should imagine, will be equal to either. Their *Juvenile Magazine*, *Teacher's Assistant*, *Christian Messenger*, and *Child's Friend*, alike in literary, artistic, and religious aspects, command our admiration. There is life in this body, anyhow. May it prosper abundantly !

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THE LEISURE HOUR, FOR 1882 ; THE SUNDAY AT HOME, FOR 1882. London : Religious Tract Society, 56, Paternoster Row.

The "*Leisure Hour*," one of the most interesting and intelligent of our New-Year visitors, comes to us with as much to charm and instruct as ever. Amongst the numerous subjects we have *Biography*, the subjects of which Sir Francis Drake, William Jackson, Edward Jenner, Rev. Harry Jones, John Linnell, Sir Charles Lyell, Jean François Millet, Monsieur Pasteur Dr. Siemens, Sir Garnet Wolsley ; articles on "Electricity and its Uses," several practical discourses on "English Thrift," by Rev. W. Blackley, a large number of "Natural History Notes," "Old Fables with New Faces," illustrated by George Cruikshank Junior, and a vast variety of other subjects, poetry, anecdotes, and tales. The illustrations are good and numerous as ever.

"*Sunday at Home*" has very much the same character. The subjects are *Biography*, *Natural History*, *Poetry*, *Proverbs*, *Tales*, *Scripture*, *Enigmas*, *Music*, &c. The chief point of difference is the *Sermon*. The Sermons, of course, are ruled by the theology and general tone of the Tract Society. These two Volumes are companions for families, of great worth, always at hand to admonish, instruct, comfort, cheer, and amuse.



THE QUIVER; an Illustrated Magazine for Sunday and General Reading, Vol. XVII. London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin, and Co.

This well-known serial provides lavishly, and yet wisely, almost every form of literature for its readers. Its *Sermons* are short, solid, and stimulating, while its *Stories*, specially its serial, "Into a Larger Room," have all the best attributes of moral fiction. The Sketches called *Consecrated Womanly Genius in Story, Song, and Service*, give vivid, but faithful, glimpses of Hannah More, Elizabeth Fry, and similar worthies. The *Essays* and the *Poetry* are by able pens. The *Half Hours with the Children* and *The Quiver Bible Class* provide as well for the child life as the other parts of the Magazine do for the youths and adults in the home. We have not yet enumerated all the contents of *The Quiver*, but must be satisfied with characterising it as a rich repertory of very varied and very good reading for such families as set any store on refinement and religion.

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POEMS AND HYMNS. By GEORGE COSTER. London: Fisher Unwin, Paternoster Row.

It seems to us that what is called poetry cannot be tested by the judgment. The ear may as well judge of fragrance, or the eye of sweetness, as logic judge of poesy. It is a thing of feeling. "Poetry, above all," says *Carlyle*, "we should have known long ago is one of those mysterious things whose origin and development never can be what we call explained: often it seems to us like the wind, blowing where it lists, coming and departing with little or no regard to any, the most cunning theory that has yet been devised of it." Poetry is passion, the stronger a man's passion, the stronger his poetic force. The short poems in this volume have a variety of theme and tone. Some are more fresh and forceful than others. A few touch a high point, and swell and boom with the poetic afflatus.

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OLIPHANT'S FAMILY LIBRARY, comprising Dr. DAVID LIVINGSTONE, by SAMUEL MOSSMAN; FLORA MACLEAN'S REWARD, by JANE KIPPEN; ANNA ROSS, by GRACE KENNEDY; THE HUT IN THE BUSH, and other Stories, by ROBERT RICHARDSON, B.A. Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson, and Co.

*Dr. David Livingstone.* Here is a clear, succinct, and very interesting sketch of one of the most remarkable men of the present century, a most admirable little book to recommend for the young.

*Flora MacLean's Reward.* This is a brief tale of a woman in humble life, who experienced a heavy share of the trials and vicissitudes of this sad and unsettled life.

*Anna Ross, the Orphan of Waterloo.* This is a new edition of a well-known little book, read by numbers of children with deep interest some twenty-five years ago.

*The Hut in the Bush.* This little book is another of the productions of Mr. Richardson, who never fails to deeply interest and instruct the youthful reader.

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SERMONS, HOMILETICAL EXPOSITIONS AND LEADING THOUGHTS ON TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE. By THOMAS DAVIES, M.A., Ph.D. First Series. London: Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster Row.

This volume consists of Fifty Discourses, the subjects of which are very varied and profoundly interesting. A great many good thoughts lie scattered through these pages, and not a few are well and powerfully expressed.



## *Leading Homily.*

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### THE ARK OF COVENANT.

*A HOMILY FOR THE TIMES.*

“WHEN YE SEE THE ARK OF THE COVENANT OF THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND THE PRIESTS THE LEVITES BEARING IT, THEN YE SHALL REMOVE FROM YOUR PLACE, AND GO AFTER IT. YET THERE SHALL BE A SPACE BETWEEN YOU AND IT, ABOUT TWO THOUSAND CUBITS BY MEASURE; COME NOT NEAR UNTO IT, THAT YE MAY KNOW THE WAY BY WHICH YE MUST GO; FOR YE HAVE NOT PASSED THIS WAY HERETOFORE.”—*Joshua* iii. 3, 4.

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**T**HE words were addressed to the people of Israel. The occasion was an important one. The people of Israel were standing on the banks of the river Jordan. One great epoch of their history was finished and they were entering upon another. The wilderness journey was ended. They had pitched their pilgrim tents for the last time. The next stage would bring them into the Land of Promise—the fruition of their hope, the goal of their pilgrimage, the theatre of their wondrous national life, the scene of transactions and events that are to-day the very hinge of the world's history.

The *guide* of the people of Israel during the exodus from Egypt, and the passage of the Red Sea, and during the forty years' sojourn in the wilderness was *the fiery cloudy pillar*. But the guide of the people of Israel from the wilderness into the Land of Promise was *the ark of the covenant of the Lord*. The ark of the covenant of the Lord was more than the fiery

cloudy pillar, and superseded it; or rather, perhaps, I ought to say, the fiery cloudy pillar developed into the ark of the covenant of the Lord; for there is continuity in the Divine dispensations; and the law of the Divine dispensations is the law of development. There is progress in the revelations of God. "The law was a shadow of good things to come." "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." "The law and the prophets were until John;" since that time "the kingdom of God is preached and every man presseth into it." "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." There *is* progress in the revelations of God; and the principle of the progress is the principle of the words, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth."

The ark of the covenant of the Lord, the new and higher guide of the people of Israel, was the special and appropriate symbol of Christ. Christ is the *living* ark of the covenant of the Lord. The meanings of the ark of the covenant of the Lord have their perfect embodiment and glorious enhancement in Christ. The ark of the covenant of the Lord was the type; Christ is the anti-type. The ark of the covenant of the Lord was the shadow—the complex shadow; Christ is the substance.

The ark of the covenant of the Lord was a kind of casket or chest, two cubits and a half in length, and a cubit and a half in height and breadth. It was made of shittim wood, and was overlaid with gold. The shittim wood and the gold represented the twofold nature of Christ. The shittim wood represented Christ's humanity, the gold represented Christ's Divinity. And Christ's Divinity comprehends, enshrines, inter-penetrates, and glorifies His humanity.

Within the ark of the covenant of the Lord was the law, the decalogue, the irrevocable law of man's moral being. And within the heart of Christ was the law. That is, He loved it, and in His character and life it was embodied perfectly.

The cover or lid of the ark of the covenant of the Lord was called the mercy-seat, or propitiatory. It was sprinkled with blood, with atoning blood. And Christ is *the propitiatory*. "Whom God hath set forth to be *propitiatory* (R. V.) through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." The law of man's moral being Christ not only loved and obeyed, but the penalty of its transgression by man He endured. That penalty was death; "and He became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."

Upon the mercy-seat, or propitiatory, stood two cherubic figures with outstretched wings, and with eager, intent, wondering gaze. "Which things the angels desire to look into." Those two cherubic figures represented the glorious angel-world. The glorious angel-world has manifold relations to the purpose of redemption. The glorious angel-world is incorporated with the economy of redemption. The angels are the servants of Christ; they fulfil the behests of Christ. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Between those two cherubic figures, and just above the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat, was the shekinah, the mysterious glory, the ineffable splendour, the present Deity. There to hear prayer; there to forgive sin; there to bless His people. Throned in the midst of a symbolism that represented law broken and law vindicated and honoured. Throned in the midst of a symbolism that represented the Holy God in relationships of mercy and love with fallen and sinful man. And all that symbolism, with its august and awful enshrinement, has its answering reality in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the *living* ark of the covenant of the Lord. "God is in Christ Jesus reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." The might and the mercy, the righteousness and the love of the invisible Father are expressed toward us through the Lord Jesus Christ. "Thou shalt call His name Emmanuel, God with us." "Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh!"

Now, very significant, I think, are the instructions that were



given to the people of Israel with reference to the ark of the covenant of the Lord, the new and higher guide of the people of Israel, and the special and appropriate symbol of Christ:—"When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure; come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go; for ye have not passed this way heretofore!"

I call these *the marching orders*—

I.—THE LINE OF THE MARCH. "Ye have not passed this way heretofore." The way was unknown. The way was untried. And it was a danger-encompassed way. Great conflicts lay in it. Great trials lay in it; trials of faith, trials of courage, trials of patience, trials of strength. The people of Israel had to conquer the Land of Promise before it could be theirs; and it was inhabited by strong and warlike tribes.

II.—THE LEADER OF THE MARCH along the unknown, untried, and danger-encompassed way. "*The ark of the covenant of the Lord.*" In other words, Jesus was the Leader of the march. He was with the Church in the wilderness—the true Joshua—the Captain of "the sacramental host of God's elect." "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; Thou that dwellest between the cherubim shine forth. Before Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up Thy strength, and come and save us." And, in answer to the cry, His banner waved before His people; and His sword of flame gleamed on the unknown, untried, danger-encompassed path, the pledge, the guarantee of safety, of progress, and of glorious victory.

III.—THE MARCH ITSELF. In other words, the following of the people of Israel. Of what sort was it to be?

1.—It was to be a *prompt* following—an unquestioning, soldier-like following. "When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it." To the high

summons, "Follow me," the response was to be, "Lord, we will follow Thee, whithersoever Thou goest."

2.—It was to be *humble, reverent* following. "Come not near unto it." The following was to be far: far, and yet near. Near because far. Far, through a perception of the greatness of God; far, through a consciousness of unworthiness. Far in that sense, and therefore near. "For thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

3.—It was to be a *trustful* following. That aspect of the following is set forth in the significant words, "*There shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure.*" The ark of the covenant of the Lord was to stand out clear and distinct, that each and all might see it; that even the little children might see it. There was to be *no crowding round* the ark of the covenant of the Lord. Nothing was to intervene between the people and their guide, and the object of their trust; not even Joshua. They were to see "*no man, save Jesus only.*"

Now; the instructions given to the people of Israel in that crisis of their history are given to God's Church to-day. The position of God's Church at the present time is analogous to the position the people of Israel occupied when these words were addressed to them. The Church "*has not passed this way heretofore.*" She is completing an epoch of her history. Her wilderness journey is ending. She is nearing the frontier of the Promised Land. The fiery cloudy pillar is about to develope into the ark of the covenant of the Lord. The dispensation of division, of coldness, of worldliness, of controversy, of scholastic theologies, is passing away, and will be succeeded by a higher and more spiritual dispensation—a dispensation in which the personal Christ will be everything to His Church,—her theology, her guide, her glory.

In the immediate future difficulties gather and storms lower. A Jordan has to be crossed, and it overflows all its banks. Siftings and testings are at hand. The transitions in the line of progress

are not accomplished easily; sometimes there are throes and agonies. We seem on the eve of numerous changes—social changes, political changes, ecclesiastical changes, politico-ecclesiastical changes, theological changes. “The heavens and the earth will be shaken”; churches, and creeds, and systems, and politics will be shaken, “that those things which are shaken may be removed, and that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”

Of the things which cannot be shaken, and which will remain, rising into new visibility and grandeur, is the Rock of Ages, the personal Christ; and the personal Christ is Christianity. The personal Christ is the creed that will survive all creeds, because the sublimated and living sum of all; and keeping the space round the personal Christ clear, as the space round the ark of the covenant was kept clear;—(that, alas! the churches have not been doing, for they have been crowding the space with all manner of confusions, obscuring the personal Christ; but keeping it clear)—clear of priestism, clear of ritualisms, clear of human theologies and theosophies; exalting the Christ, honouring the Christ, filling the vision of the soul with the Christ; as preachers and teachers, being content to be merely hierophants of Christ, we shall endure the testings, and siftings, and purgings that are most surely coming, and shall cross every Jordan of difficulty; and under His leadership shall take possession of the Land of Promise,—the goal of the Church’s long and weary pilgrimage, the theatre of her most splendid conquests, and the scene of her largest, freest intellectual, spiritual, and communal life.

BRIGHTON.

W. CROSBIE, M.A., LL.B.

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“I will mention a very striking illustration of the difference between men’s striving to improve one or another individual good quality, and the improving the common root of all of them, and thereby improving them all at once. The former is the way in which a human artificer works—a statuary, for instance, sometimes making a finger, sometimes a leg, and so on—while the latter, the workmanship of the Divine Artificer, is like the growth of a plant or a tree, in which all the various parts are swelling out and increasing, or, as we term it, *growing*, at the same time.”  
—*Letter from Wm. Wilberforce to Samuel Wilberforce when a boy at school.*

# Homiletical Commentary.

## HOMILETIC SKETCHES ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

### Piety exulting in Divine Goodness.

"Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem ; praise thy God, O Zion.  
 For He hath strengthened the bars of thy gates :  
 He hath blessed thy children within thee.  
 He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the  
     wheat.  
 He sendeth forth His commandment upon earth :  
 His word runneth very swiftly.  
 He giveth snow like wool :  
 He scattereth the hoar frost like ashes.  
 He casteth forth His ice like morsels :  
 Who can stand before His cold ?  
 He sendeth out His word, and melteth them :  
 He causeth His wind to blow, and the waters flow.  
 He sheweth His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His judgments unto  
     Israel.  
 He hath not dealt so with any nation :  
 And as for His judgments, they have not known them.  
 Praise ye the Lord."—*Psalms* cxlvii. 12-20.

ANNOTATIONS: Ver. 12.—"*Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem : Praise thy God, O Zion.*" Although these stanzas are put here as constituting a part of Psalm 147, they are in all probability a fresh composition. The poet calls on restored Jerusalem to praise God, Who has raised her from ruins and strengthened her with gates, who has given her peace instead of conflict, plenty

instead of desolation. From Him alone all earthly blessings come, the cold of winter and the genial breezes of spring ; and to Israel He has manifested Himself not only as the God of nature but as the God of revelation. To all the world He has imparted His outward gifts ; to Israel alone has He vouchsafed the knowledge of Himself.  
 Ver. 13.—"*For He has strength-*



ened the bars of thy gates; *He hath blessed thy children within thee.*" "And I said unto them let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot: and while they stand by, let them shut the doors and bar them." But *Dr. Moll, Hupfeld*, and others do not regard this verse as referring literally to the gates of Jerusalem, but as a figurative expression to note its security.

Ver. 14.—"*He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.*" Allusion is here made to the peace and prosperity of the land.

Ver. 15.—"*He sendeth forth His commandment upon earth: His word runneth very swiftly.*" Or some render it, "Who sendeth His commandment upon earth." God's word is the instrument of His power, He speaks and it is done.

Verses 16, 17.—"*He giveth snow like wool: He scattereth the hoar frost like ashes. He casteth forth His ice like morsels: Who can stand before His cold?*" "He wraps the earth in snow in a warm white woollen garment, and scatters the frost so that the trees appear as if powdered with ashes blown

about by the wind."—*Jennings and Low.*

Ver. 18.—"*He sendeth out His word and melteth them; He causeth His wind to blow, and the waters flow.*" "Israel, in the captivity, had been ice-bound, like ships of Arctic voyagers in the Polar Sea; but God sent forth the vernal breeze of His love, and the water flowed, the ice melted, and they were released."—*Wordsworth.*

Verses 19, 20.—"*He sheweth (declares) His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for His judgments they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord.*" "They could not," says *Dr. Kay*, "be like the rest of the nations; they must be better or worse, happier or more wretched than they. *All*, indeed, were under God's moral government; but the heathen nations were not informed of the exact nature of their relation to God; Israel was. Israel knew God's law; they were made to know also His judicial sentence on them for violations of that law; and no less His judicial award of absolution to the sincerely penitent."

HOMILETICS.—We have here *piety thankfully exulting in the*

*recognition of Divine Goodness.* Divine beneficence is here recognised in three aspects—

I.—IN THE GENERAL PROSPERITY OF SOCIETY. The pious poet here recognises the good hand of God.

First: In the rebuilding of the city. "*Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion. For He hath strengthened the bars of thy gates: He hath blessed thy children within thee.*" Though men were engaged in rebuilding the city and strengthening the bars of its gates, Divine goodness was in it. This goodness gave men the disposition to do the work, the adequate executive energy, and the time and facilities. All the progress of a people in government, in architecture, in husbandry, and in the various arts, useful and ornamental, should be ascribed to God as the First Cause. He is in all. The poet here recognises the hand of God—

Secondly: In the restoration of peace and prosperity. "*He maketh peace in thy borders.*" When the city was rebuilt the tumult of war was for a time hushed, and supplies of food returned. The sword being sheathed, the ploughshare was brought into operation, and plenty followed in the march of peace. The pious poet saw God in all of this, and so should we, and extol His name in all the blessings of His temporal providence. God's goodness is here referred to as seen—

II.—IN THE BENEFICENT MUTATIONS OF THE WEATHER. "*He giveth snow like wool, He scattereth the hoar frost like ashes. He casteth forth His ice like morsels: Who can stand before His cold?*" Men are in the habit of complaining of the weather as too hot or too cold, too wet or too dry, too stormy or too calm, but in these very changes there is mercy. They are required in order to make the earth fertile and fruitful, and to stimulate humanity to a thousand industries. Hence "He scatters the hoar frost and binds the earth in bands of ice," and again sends forth His word, "melts the whole into refreshing streams," and warms the earth into life. Whilst men of science ascribe meteorological changes to what they call laws, and the multitudes are ever grumbling with the weather, true philosophy ascribes all not only to the agency of God but to the *benevolence* of that agency.

"These," says Thomson, "as they change, Almighty Father, these are but the varied God. The rolling year is full of Thee." "Autumn into winter, winter into spring," says Mulock, "spring into summer, summer into fall—so rolls the changing year." God's goodness is here referred to as seen—

III.—IN THE MORAL REVELATIONS TO MANKIND "*He sheweth His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His judgments unto Israel.*" God's word not only acts on material nature, originates, fashions, sustains and controls it, but on human souls. In the one case it conveys His *resistless* energy, in the other, His *moral* reason and influence. He reveals His moral laws to men (1) By the retributions of history, (2) By the intuitions of conscience, (3) By His written word, and (4) By His blessed Son. To some His moral revelations are fuller than to others. "*He sheweth His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His judgments unto Israel.*"

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

## HOMILETIC SKETCH ON THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

### Phases of Piety.

"BUT MARY STOOD WITHOUT AT THE SEPULCHRE WEEPING; AND AS SHE WEPT, SHE STOOPED DOWN, AND LOOKED INTO THE SEPULCHRE, AND SEETH TWO ANGELS IN WHITE, SITTING, THE ONE AT THE HEAD, AND THE OTHER AT THE FEET, WHERE THE BODY OF JESUS HAD LAIN. AND THEY SAY UNTO HER, WOMAN, WHY WEEPEST THOU? SHE SAITH UNTO THEM, BECAUSE THEY HAVE TAKEN AWAY MY LORD, AND I KNOW NOT WHERE THEY HAVE LAID HIM. AND WHEN SHE HAD THUS SAID, SHE TURNED HERSELF BACK, AND SAW JESUS STANDING, AND KNEW NOT THAT IT WAS JESUS. JESUS SAITH UNTO HER, WOMAN, WHY WEEPEST THOU? WHOM SEEKEST THOU? SHE, SUPPOSING HIM TO BE THE GARDENER, SAITH UNTO HIM, SIR, IF THOU HAVEST BORNE HIM HENCE, TELL ME WHERE THOU HAST LAID HIM, AND I WILL TAKE HIM AWAY. JESUS SAITH UNTO HER, MARY. SHE TURNED HERSELF, AND SAITH UNTO HIM, RABBONI; WHICH IS TO SAY, MASTER. JESUS SAITH UNTO HER, TOUCH ME NOT; FOR I AM NOT YET ASCENDED TO MY FATHER; BUT GO TO MY BRETHREN, AND SAY UNTO THEM, I ASCEND UNTO MY FATHER, AND YOUR FATHER; AND TO MY GOD, AND YOUR GOD. MARY MAGDALENE CAME AND TOLD THE DISCIPLES THAT SHE HAD SEEN THE LORD, AND THAT HE HAD SPOKEN THESE THINGS UNTO HER."—*John* xx. 11-18.

EXPOSITION: Ver. 11.—"*But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping.*" It would seem from

this that Mary had run with the two disciples to the sepulchre, and while they went in she

stood "*without weeping.*" "*And as she wept she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre.*" How earnestly and intently she must have looked, how anxious to know the result of the search, and weeping all the while.

Ver 12.—"*And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.*" See Matt. xxviii., Mark xviii., Luke xxiv. This appears to have been a distinct vision to Mary which she probably related to the author of this Gospel. Though John himself might not have witnessed it, he had such faith in her testimony that he records it. These angels were "*in white,*"—emblem of celestial purity,—"*the one at the head, the other at the feet.*" They were the heavenly watchguards of that sacred body.

Ver. 13.—"*And they say unto her, Woman, Why weepest thou?*" A modern expositor says the question was asked "not because they knew not why she wept, but to open the way to make her know that there was no reason to weep." "*She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.*" This is the passionate cry of her heart, the

supposed loss of Christ was the source of her agony.

Ver. 14.—"*And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.*"

As she appears to have turned away from the angels, another form arrested her attention, it was that of "*Jesus,*" but she failed to recognise Him. Perhaps in figure, feature, gait, and garb He was not as she had seen Him last.

Ver. 15.—"*Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?*" How different are these words spoken by Jesus, to the same words even spoken by the angels. How different the feelings that prompted them, how different the tones in which they were uttered. "*She, supposing Him to be the gardener.*" Perhaps a servant of Joseph of Arimathea, employed to take care of the garden. "*Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him and I will take Him away.*" Three times she refers to the Lord simply by the pronoun "*Him.*" She has named Him in the previous verse, and, perhaps, thinks that the gardener had heard those words; but the impression formed from her eager words is that her own mind is so entirely filled with



the one subject that she supposes it to be in the minds of others. The same passionate eagerness is heard in the words which follow. Devotion such as hers does not weigh difficulties, a place of safety for that sacred body is the object of her will, and that will neither dreads danger nor sees that the task would be physically impossible, but asserts in the confidence of its own strength,—“*and I will take Him away.*”

Ver. 16.—“*Jesus saith unto her, Mary.*” “This word was, no doubt, pronounced with a peculiar intonation which she recognised at once as that of Jesus.” The sound of that voice thrilled her whole frame. “*She turned herself and saith unto Him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master.*” She had heard her own name pronounced in a well-known voice, and it brought back to her memories that flood her with emotions, and in her ecstasy she exclaims in her native Hebrew

dialect, “*Rabboni, which is to say, Master.*”

Ver. 17.—“*Jesus saith unto her, Touch Me not.*” The word “*Touch*” signifies, we are told, a Greek word which is to cling to, to fasten on to, to clasp. In the ecstasy of her feeling, she cast herself at His feet (Matt. xxviii. 9), and with accustomed reverential embrace, clung to His knees. The reply of our Saviour seems to mean, do not continue to cling to Me, “*For I am not yet ascended to My Father.*” I am about ascending to our common Father, and we shall meet again. “Where I am there ye shall be also.” “*But go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.*” This was a grand commission for her.

Ver. 18.—“*Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things unto her.*” She sets herself at once to discharge her mission.

HOMILETICS.—This fragment of evangelic history may be taken to illustrate a three-fold aspect of *piety*. Here we have—

I.—PIETY SINKING INTO SADNESS. “*Mary stood without the sepulchre weeping.*” She seemed overwhelmed with sadness. Her sadness revealed two things.

First: The *intensity of her affection*. What is that which makes bereavement painful? *Love*. Had we no affection for the departed we should drop no tear into their graves. The

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depth of Mary's distress reveals the depth of her love. Her sadness reveals—

Secondly : *The imperfection of her faith.* He, whose loss she was mourning, was at that moment standing by her side. She supposed "*Him to be the gardener.*" Ah, me! how often, through the lack of faith, we degrade the grandest things in the universe! We only see common labourers, gardeners, where the divinities are present and in action. For this lack of faith she was very inexcusable; for had she not been told He would rise from the dead on the third day? She wept for the very reason that she ought to have rejoiced. What poor blind creatures are we! We often see nothing but a "*gardener,*" where in reality stands the Divinest messenger of God! O for eyes to see the Divine, even under the humblest form of life, and to detect blessings even in disguise. How often do we weep when we ought to rejoice. Like Jacob we say, "All these things are against us," whereas in reality, as in his case, they are for us. Piety has its dark moods; days when the sea of life becomes very rough, and when neither stars nor sun appear. Here we have—

II.—PIETY RISING INTO RAPTURE. "*Jesus saith unto her, Mary, she turned herself and saith unto Him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master.*" Christ does not condemn the tears. There is no harm in weeping. He Himself wept.

"The very law which moulds a tear  
And bids it trickle from its source,  
That law preserves the earth a sphere,  
And guides the planets in their course."—*Rogers.*

He only suggests the impropriety of the cause. Her exclamation, "*Rabboni,*" indicates that she had risen into an ecstasy of soul. Two facts are here to be observed—

First: *The rapidity of our mental changes.* This woman passed, as in a moment, from anguish to ecstasy. To such changes we are ever exposed, at least in this world. We can pass with the swiftness of lightning from one pole of experience to another. Though clouds of darkest gloom and most portentous shapes may overspread the heavens of the soul, *one* thought can sweep them

clean away, and make the azure arch blaze with the light of noon. The awful swiftness with which we can pass from mood to mood urges the necessity of implicitly confiding in that God Who alone can keep us in "perfect peace." Another fact to be observed here is—

Secondly: *The power of Christ's voice.* What effected this change? One word of His; the word "*Mary*." He pronounced it, no doubt, with an intonation which she recognised. She knew the voice, it rang with the old notes of love. Neither the mysterious sorrows of Gethsemane, the agonies of the Cross, the tortures of death, nor the darkness of the grave, had changed that loving voice. It sounded "*Mary*" now as ever. Thus by a word Christ can lift the soul into the highest bliss. It was not the voice of the angels that uplifted her, but that of Christ. Here we have—

III.—PIETY GOING INTO ACTION. "*Go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father, and to My God, and your God.*" This she promptly attended to. Notice here—

First: *Christ's merciful identification with His disciples.* "*My Father, and your Father.*" The good of all ages are one with Him, children of the same Infinite Father. This command indicates—

Secondly: *The heavenward direction which her sympathies should take.* Look upward, "*I ascend.*" "Seek those things that are above." Notice—

Thirdly: *The right direction of religious feeling.* Do not live in mere sentiment; turn your feelings into actions. Action will at once *express temper and utilise your emotions.* Go and work. Piety in duteous action is piety in its highest and safest state. Sighs of sorrow and shouts of rapture are verily worse than worthless, unless they pass into duteous deeds, and consolidate the character. Tears should invigorate the moral heart as rain strengthens the oak.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

LONDON,

SKETCHES ON II. CORINTHIANS,

BY DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

The False and True Method of Estimating Men.

“LET SUCH AN ONE THINK THIS, THAT, SUCH AS WE ARE IN WORD BY LETTERS WHEN WE ARE ABSENT, SUCH WILL WE BE ALSO IN DEED WHEN WE ARE PRESENT. FOR WE DARE NOT MAKE OURSELVES OF THE NUMBER, OR COMPARE OURSELVES WITH SOME THAT COMMEND THEMSELVES: BUT THEY MEASURING THEMSELVES BY THEMSELVES, AND COMPARING THEMSELVES AMONG THEMSELVES, ARE NOT WISE. BUT WE WILL NOT BOAST OF THINGS WITHOUT OUR MEASURE, BUT ACCORDING TO THE MEASURE OF THE RULE WHICH GOD HATH DISTRIBUTED TO US, A MEASURE TO REACH EVEN UNTO YOU.”—2 Cor. x. 11-13.

IN these verses we have two subjects worthy of notice. I.—The false and true method of estimating the character of OTHERS. “Let such an one think this that such as we are in word by letters,” &c. First: To judge by *public report is a wrong method*. It would almost seem that there was a general impression in Corinth that not only was Paul’s “bodily presence” somewhat contemptible, but that his letters were not a fair representation of himself, that they displayed an elevation and a heroism of which the writer was destitute, and from this general impression he was judged and considered to be something of a boaster and charlatan. How common it is for people to judge those they have never seen by general report! But a miserably false standard of judgment is this. Not unfrequently have I received impressions concerning a person whom I have never seen, which a subsequent personal acquaintance has completely dispelled. As a rule, the public estimate of men, both in Church and State, is most fallacious and unjust. Secondly: To judge by *personal knowledge is the true method*. “Let such an one think (reckon) this, that such as we are in word by letters, such will we be also in deed when we are present.” The meaning of this seems to be, wait until I come amongst you and you will find that I am true to the character of my letters, that I will act out their spirit. A man’s own letters, even when rightly interpreted, will not give a free and a complete idea of the author. The author is greater than his book, the man greater than his productions. One hour with an author will give me a better idea of him than I could obtain from all the productions of his pen, however voluminous. II.—The false and true method of estimating OUR OWN CHARACTERS. First: The *false method is comparing our own character with the character of*



others. "Measuring themselves by themselves." This the Corinthians seem to have done, and this, perhaps, is the general tendency of mankind. We judge ourselves by the characters of others. When we are accused we are prone to say we are not worse than so-and-so. A false standard this, because (1) The mass of mankind are corrupt. (2) The best of men are more or less imperfect. (3) There is only One perfect character—Jesus Christ. In these words Paul indicates (a) That it is a *terrible* thing thus to judge ourselves. "We dare not (are not bold enough) make ourselves of the number." Truly it is a terrible thing, for it leads to fearful issues. (b) That it is an *unwise* thing thus to judge ourselves. Those who compare themselves with others "are not wise," or are "without understanding." Secondly: The true method is judging ourselves *by the will of God*. "According to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us." Though the apostle by the expression "rule which God hath distributed" *primarily refers to the Divine limits of his apostolic work*, as will appear again, the "rule" applies also to his personal character. God's will is the standard or canon by which all characters are to be determined. CONCLUSION.—"Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me: and lead me in the way everlasting."

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## The True Sphere of Human Usefulness and the Source of Human Glory.

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"FOR WE STRETCH NOT OURSELVES BEYOND OUR MEASURE, AS THOUGH WE REACHED NOT UNTO YOU: FOR WE ARE COME AS FAR AS TO YOU ALSO IN PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. NOT BOASTING OF THINGS WITHOUT OUR MEASURE, THAT IS, OF OTHER MEN'S LABOURS; BUT HAVING HOPE, WHEN YOUR FAITH IS INCREASED, THAT WE SHALL BE ENLARGED BY YOU ACCORDING TO OUR RULE ABUNDANTLY. TO PREACH THE GOSPEL IN THE REGIONS BEYOND YOU, AND NOT TO BOAST IN ANOTHER MAN'S LINE OF THINGS MADE READY TO OUR HAND. BUT HE THAT GLORIETH, LET HIM GLORY IN THE LORD. FOR NOT HE THAT COMMENDETH HIMSELF IS APPROVED, BUT WHOM THE LORD COMMENDETH."—2 Cor. x. 14-18.

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HERE are two subjects for meditation. I.—The true SPHERE OF HUMAN USEFULNESS. First: It is a sphere in which we are placed by *Divine appointment*. Paul teaches that his sphere of labour in Corinth was according to the Divine will. "We stretch not ourselves beyond our measure (overmuch) as though we reached not unto you." As if he had

said I am not come to Corinth merely by my own inclinations, or as a matter of impulse or caprice, or as an intruder. I am come here by the will of God. I am licensed by Him to this sphere. Secondly: The consciousness that we are in this sphere is a *just reason for exultation*. "Not boasting of things without our measure." As if Paul had said, "my boasting, or my exultation is not that I have entered into the sphere of other men's labours, but that I am in the sphere to which I have been divinely commissioned." The opponents of Paul, in Corinth, boasted of the influence they had gained in the Church which he himself had founded by his self-sacrificing labours, and whose members owed, either directly or indirectly, their conversion to him; whereas his rejoicing was that he was doing the work of God in the *sphere to which he had been sent*. Thirdly: It is a sphere which *widens with our usefulness*. Although Paul felt that Corinth was the sphere to which he had been sent, he felt that the field would be widened according to his spiritual success. Having hope when your faith is increased (that as your faith groweth) that we shall be enlarged (magnified) by you according to our will (province) abundantly." The increase of their faith would lead to an enlargement of his sphere of labour. *The true method of extending the sphere of labour to which we have been sent, is by the multiplication of our converts*. Each soul which a minister brings to Christ enlarges the field of his usefulness; enables him to break up new ground still farther on. Another subject for meditation here is II.—THE TRUE SOURCE OF HUMAN EXULTATION. In what did Paul exult or "boast"? First: Not in *crediting himself with the labours of other men*. He did not "boast in another man's line (province) of things made ready to our hand." How common it is for men to credit themselves with the labours of others! We find this in every department of labour. In literature there are plagiarists, in scientific discoveries and artistic inventions there are unjust claimants, and even in religion one minister is often found to claim the good that others have accomplished. Paul was above this. The genius of Christianity condemns this mean and miserable dishonesty. Paul exulted Secondly: Not in *self-commendation*. "For not he that commendeth himself is approved." That conscience approves of our conduct, though at all times a source of pleasure is not a true source of exultation; for conscience is not infallible. Conscience sometimes deceives. What then was his true source of exultation? "He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord." "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross."

## The Highest Knowledge and the Noblest Generosity.

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“FOR I SUPPOSE I WAS NOT A WHIT BEHIND THE VERY CHIEFEST APOSTLES. BUT THOUGH I BE RUDE IN SPEECH, YET NOT IN KNOWLEDGE; BUT WE HAVE BEEN THOROUGHLY MADE MANIFEST AMONG YOU IN ALL THINGS. HAVE I COMMITTED AN OFFENCE IN ABASING MYSELF THAT YE MIGHT BE EXALTED, BECAUSE I HAVE PREACHED TO YOU THE GOSPEL OF GOD FREELY? I ROBBED OTHER CHURCHES, TAKING WAGES OF THEM, TO DO YOU SERVICE. AND WHEN I WAS PRESENT WITH YOU, AND WANTED, I WAS CHARGEABLE TO NO MAN: FOR THAT WHICH WAS LACKING TO ME THE BRETHREN WHICH CAME FROM MACEDONIA SUPPLIED: AND IN ALL THINGS I HAVE KEPT MYSELF FROM BEING BURDENSOME UNTO YOU, AND SO WILL I KEEP MYSELF. AS THE TRUTH OF CHRIST IS IN ME, NO MAN SHALL STOP ME OF THIS BOASTING IN THE REGIONS OF ACHAIA. WHEREFORE? BECAUSE I LOVE YOU NOT? GOD KNOWETH. BUT WHAT I DO, THAT I WILL DO, THAT I MAY CUT OFF OCCASION FROM THEM WHICH DESIRE OCCASION; THAT WHEREIN THEY GLORY, THEY MAY BE FOUND EVEN AS WE.”—2 *Cor.* xi. 5-12.

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Few things in human life are more distasteful than egotism or vanity. There are those in society whose chief delight is to parade their own imaginary merits and distinctions. We are wrong, however, if we regard the man who sometimes speaks about himself as an egotist. When a man is denied virtues which he knows he possesses, and charged with faults of which his conscience tells him he is not guilty, he is bound by the laws of his nature to stand up in self-defence. Every man is justified in fighting for his moral reputation, which is to him more precious than gold, and dear to him as life itself. This is just what Paul does here, and in many other places in his letters to the Corinthians. He had slanderers at Corinth. Here he says, “For I suppose (reckon) I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.” Two facts are here indicated which warranted his boasting. I.—He felt that though he had not rhetorical accomplishments HE HAD THE HIGHEST KNOWLEDGE. “Though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge.” He was not trained in all the rhetorical arts of Grecian oratory, his periods were not polished, his sentences were not tuneful, and, perhaps, his utterance lacked flow, and his voice music. This he seems to have felt, but what of that? He had the highest “knowledge.” What is the grandest oratory without true knowledge? Clouds of golden splendour without water for the thirsty land. Paul’s knowledge was of the highest kind. He knew Christ, he knew what Christ was to him, what He had done for him, as well as what He was in Himself, and in His relation to the Father and the universe. This is the science of all sciences; the science of which all other sciences are to it the

mere leaf, or stem, or branch, of which this is the root. "This is life eternal to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." II.—He felt that though he consecrated himself to their highest interests he RECEIVED FROM THEM NO REMUNERATION. What trials he endured for them, what perils he braved for them, what labours he prosecuted for them (see verses 24 to 27). All this was done and endured for what? Not for selfish ends, not for worldly gain. "Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the Gospel of God freely?" Why did he not receive remuneration of their hands? Nay, why did he reject it? (1) Not because he did not need such a recompense. "And when I was present with you and wanted, I was chargeable to no man." He was dependent upon such contributions for his subsistence. He had received them at Thessalonica before his first visit to Corinth, even twice. (2) Not because he did not love them. "Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth." It would have been a *gratification* to those whom he had spiritually saved, to have made some secular recompense for his labours, but he denied them this gratification, not because he did not love them. Why then did he reject their secular help? First: To *furnish in his own life a proof of the benevolent terms of the gospel*. "I preach to you the gospel of God freely." The gospel is a free gift of God, and I present it to you as a free gift. The gospel should never be preached as a *means of livelihood* or for filthy lucre. Secondly: To *silence the tongue of his slanderers*. No doubt his enemies at Corinth sought in every way to degrade the apostle. The false apostles, no doubt, boasted that they did their work there as benefactors disinterestedly and without pay. Had Paul taken payment he would have given them some ground for boasting of their generosity. Thirdly: To *compel his enemies by his example to act from generous impulses*. "That they may be found as we are." "Notice," says *Mr. Beet*, "the bitter irony of these words. Paul's opponents boasted their disinterestedness whilst making gain of the Corinthians, and eagerly watched him to detect self-enrichment, that they might boast of their own superiority. These have been the tactics of demagogues in all ages. But Paul resolved to refuse just recompense for real and great benefits, that thus, by his example, he may compel those who boasted their superiority to come up to his own level of working without pay, so that when his conduct and theirs are investigated, they may be found to be as disinterested as he was. CONCLUSION.—Truly



that man might well exult who feels that however deficient in mere verbal learning, he possesses the highest knowledge, the knowledge of Christ, and who also feels that he is rendering to men the highest service from kindly generous impulses without a desire for fee or reward, giving freely to men what God has given freely to all—the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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### Self-Misrepresentation.

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“FOR SUCH ARE FALSE APOSTLES, DECEITFUL WORKERS, TRANSFORMING THEMSELVES INTO THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST. AND NO MARVEL; FOR SATAN HIMSELF IS TRANSFORMED INTO AN ANGEL OF LIGHT. THEREFORE IT IS NO GREAT THING IF HIS MINISTERS ALSO BE TRANSFORMED AS THE MINISTERS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS; WHOSE END SHALL BE ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS.”—2 Cor. xi. 13-15.

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THREE thoughts are suggested by these words. I.—MAN HAS THE POWER OF MISREPRESENTING HIS CHARACTER TO OTHERS. Naturalists tell us of animals which have the power to appear what they really are not. Some feign sleep and death. Be this as it may, man has this power in an eminent degree—he can disguise himself and live in masquerade. Hence our Saviour speaks of “wolves in sheep’s clothing.” In fact throughout all circles and populations those who appear to be what they really are are in a miserable minority. As a rule men are not what they seem. II.—In the exercise of this power man can INVEST EVIL WITH THE HIGHEST FORMS OF GOOD. The “false apostles,” to whom reference is here made, seem to have done so. Paul speaks of them as “deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ; and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.” *The worse a man is the stronger the temptation he has to assume the forms of goodness.* Were corrupt men to show the state of their hearts to their contemporaries they would recoil from them with horror and disgust, and they would be utterly unable to enjoy social intercourse, or to transact their worldly business. As a rule, the worse a man is the more strenuous his efforts to assume the habiliments of virtue. Selfishness robes itself in the garb of benevolence, error speaks in the language of truth. Hence it does not follow that a man is a true apostle or minister of Christ because he appears in the character. Some of the worst men on the earth have been deacons and priests, occupied pulpits and preached sermons. “No marvel,” says the apostle, “for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.” Hence it behoves us all

to look well into the real moral character of those who set themselves up as the representatives of Christ and the teachers of religion. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world." III.—He who exercises this power in this way **RENDERS HIMSELF LIABLE TO TERRIBLE PUNISHMENT.** "Whose end shall be according to their works." Of all characters the *hypocrite* is the most guilty and abhorrent. More terrible and more frequent were the denunciations Christ hurled against such, than those against the voluptuary, the gross sensualist, or the sordid worldling. "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" &c. (See Matt. xxiii. 13-33.) As such are the greatest sinners, such will have the most terrible end, the "end shall be *according to their works.*" They will reap the fruit of their own doings. **CONCLUSION.**—Learn First: The duty of *self-truthfulness.* Let us seek to be such true men, so true to self, society, and God, that we may have no temptation whatever to play the hypocrite, or to appear to others what we are not.

"To thine own self be true  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

Learn Secondly: The duty of *social caution.* Do not let us estimate men by their appearances, and take them into the circle of our confidence and friendship, merely on account of what they appear to be. Often those whose outward garb is the most holy are inwardly the most corrupt; who outwardly move as angels of light, are inwardly the greatest devils. Let us learn to take off the mask, to disrobe corruption of its external raiment of purity, and to give neither our trust nor our sympathy until we are convinced that they have truth in the "inward parts."

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**TELEPHONIC MESSAGES—THE DEATHLESSNESS OF WORDS.**—We are promised a variation of the telephone most wonderful. Indeed it cannot be doubted that in the immediate future this instrument having received and stored up the vibrations produced by the human voice, and being closed up, say for one or more centuries—probably for ages—will, when unloosed, give forth not only the message but the very tones in which its words were spoken. May not this illustrate and enforce many passages of Scripture, and chiefly two. "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." "*My words shall not pass away.*" T. B. K.

## NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

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“Self-tempted.”

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James i. 14, 15.—“BUT EVERY MAN IS TEMPTED, WHEN HE IS DRAWN AWAY OF HIS OWN LUST, AND ENTICED. THEN WHEN LUST HATH CONCEIVED, IT BRINGETH FORTH SIN : AND SIN, WHEN IT IS FINISHED, BRINGETH FORTH DEATH.”

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THE apostle James regarded questions of life and godliness in their severely practical aspect, and the utterance before us is clear and explicit testimony to this effect. Not that he was not given to speculative meditation upon these things; not that he does not philosophise even or enquire curiously into the origin and nature of human experiences, as related to the Divine; of this there is abundant evidence in his epistle throughout. He had read and pondered over the books of the wisdom of the Old Testament; he had meditated upon the ways of God to man; he had studied the workings of his own heart; and, had he chosen, he might have given, in connection with this very question before us, a minute analysis of the moral character of the desires of the flesh and of the mind, or have cast light upon the origin of that evil taint which spreads itself over these desires and which gives to them their corrupting power. This, however, would have been to lead his readers away from their own personal interest in these matters to a merely speculative interest in the more or less exhaustive development of them as speculative; it would have been to take away their thought from the one thing on which he wished to fix their whole attention; it would have been to make that merely an intellectual problem which he wished to bring home in the way of practical experience, something with which every one of his hearers had to do. James knew, as all practical men know, that people in general are quite ready to be interested in religious discussions so long as these are carried on far enough away; and, perhaps, there are no discussions so

intellectually fascinating as just those which the apostle wishes here to treat of in their exclusively practical aspect. "The moral character of human desires"; "the origin of the evil taint that still adheres to them"; these have fascinated the minds of men in all ages; these have been a source of unabated interest to men even who have never once tried to bring the practical truths they imply to bear upon their own lives; and doubtless they had strong attractions for the apostle before us, in connection with the very thought he is now giving utterance to. But he does not allow himself to be drawn away by them; he has one practical truth he is in earnest about making clear to the hearts and consciences of his readers, and everything else must stand aside for that. Discussions about the nature and the origin of evil may not come before, though they may come after, the thorough conviction and belief that the evil which a man himself manifests is his own, only his own, to be accounted for only by himself. When a man has faced his sin as his own sin, has repented of it, been pardoned for it, and has got the mastery over it, it will be time enough to enquire into its nature and source. So does the apostle wisely judge; and so, having ascribed righteousness to his Maker, having shown that no portion of the blame of a man's sin rests upon God, he proceeds to make manifest where all the blame of it lies, and where, therefore, all the responsibility of it is to be looked for. *"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."*

We have here the "natural history of sin," so far as it is present to a man's own consciousness, from the time that the tempting desire begins to show itself, till the time when fully matured and perfected it receives its due award; and it is at this point, and with this before us, that we understand why the apostle makes no reference to what elsewhere in Scripture has such prominence given to it,—I mean Satanic temptation. It is the doctrine of Scripture that man is liable to



be, and is, actually tempted by Satanic agencies; that he is exposed to the wicked insinuations and evil suggestions of the spiritual enemy of God and man,—the tempter from the beginning; that he “wrestles not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with the ruler of this darkness, with spiritual wickednesses in high places.” It is further, again, however the doctrine of Scripture that Satan cannot succeed in tempting a man without that man’s own free and deliberate consent; that the door of a man’s heart cannot be forced even by Satanic powers; and that if it is opened and Satan enters by it, as he did in the case of Judas, it is opened by the man’s own hand. Satan has, and exerts, much power over those who do not resist him; but he can neither drive nor draw a man into sin, even the slightest, so long as the man himself refuses to be driven or drawn; that the power begins when the man himself gives his consent; that is to say when he begins to desire what Satan would have him to desire, when he begins to be likeminded with Satan, when the tempted and the tempter are at one. Now the apostle assumes all this; he begins at a point further on. Satan may have excited the lust or the evil desire, or it may have arisen at once out of the man’s own corrupt nature,—the one or the other, or both; be this as it may, it is there now, the man’s own, his own lust, his own desire. Putting aside everything else as irrelevant, the apostle draws every man’s attention to this self-acknowledged fact: “every man is tempted by his own lust.”

The word “lust” here, and oftentimes in Scripture, means desire in its widest sense, desire of anything, whatever can gratify the soul or sense, as the desire of sensual pleasure, or the desire of knowledge, the love of money, of approbation, of power; “all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.” It is an error in interpretation, and it is a greater error in the practical consideration of this subject to limit the meaning of the word to the merely sensual. It means this, but it means a great deal more than this; and many who are free from it in its more degrading forms are its veriest slaves in others. The “lust of the

**Lust, in its depth and in its height.**

flesh" is one form of it, but the "lust of the eye" is another ; and still another is the "pride of life." Lust is desire ; and desire is as wide and embraces as many objects as human life, from its lowest depths to loftiest heights, can long after. It embraces "all that is in the world."

A man's own lust ; his own desire. Does this mean the desire that is special to this man as distinguished from the desire that is special to that other man, what another apostle calls "the besetting sin" ? Or does it mean the desire which is his own

What is the besetting sin ? possession ; which belongs to him ; and for the results of which in his life he will be called to account ? In other words, does the apostle speak of lust as a person's own possession ; or, having already done this, does he, probing further down, discover that not only is a man's lust his own, but that every man has a special lust of his own ? Both ; but in the order just named. Lust is a man's own ; but every man has a lust of his own, and it is through this lust of his own, this desire which is so specially strong in him, that he is tempted, that he is drawn away and enticed. There are some desires that are not very strong in a man, he has scarcely ever been conscious of their presence ; if they were to rise up in his heart, they would never have any sway there ; these are not the desires by which he will be drawn away and enticed. For example, he has no desire for money, he does not care to accumulate it, he is not capable of getting pleasure from knowing that he is becoming a richer man, he gives it away with a lavish hand just as he gets it ; such an one will not be tempted by the love of money, the greed of gain ; *his idolatry* will not be that of covetousness. But there are desires which are very vivid, quick, vital in every nerve of his being ; he loves applause, he loves excitement, he loves the convivial meeting, the song, and the dance, and the dangerous hilarities that attend on these ; these will be his tempters, these will draw him away and entice him ; it is here that he is weak, here that they are strong. And this man who could never have been moved by love of money is made captive at its will, cast down, disgraced, and slain by the love of strong drink. "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and

enticed" (Joseph's brethren, *envy*; Peter, *self-reliance*; Demas, the *present world*; Ahab, *covetousness*; Haman, *ambition*; Judas, *money*; Tito, in George Eliot's "Romola," *ease*).

*Drawn away and enticed*: literally, as by a hook or a bait; by a hook, as a fish is drawn away from the safety and security of the deep waters, by a bait, as a bird is enticed into then et: really, drawn away from the safety and security of the principles which would have sheltered from the force of temptation; enticed on to the enchanted ground where evil looks so like good, where the voice of the Siren is pleasing to the soul and sense, and where the form of the enchantress is seen only to be embraced. If a man wants to seduce another into wrong there

Two things  
needed to  
enticement.

are two things he must do before he can succeed; he must first break down the strong walls of principle with which that other has surrounded himself; or, to keep to the figure before us, he must draw him away from the protection of these principles—he must get him outside of them, out of the reach and recollection of them. This is one thing he must do, but there is another: he must make the evil thing put on the semblance of good, the thing that is hideous in its nature beautiful, transfigured in the glamour that is cast round it; in other words, the man must be enticed, and, of course, he can only be enticed by what, to him, is enticing. The seducer

The arts of  
the seducer.

must break down principle—the principles that have been built up by a father's prayers, that have been consecrated by a mother's tears; he must have the devil's art of making the worse appear the better reason, of decking out deformity in the garb of beauty, before it can be said of his victim that he has been drawn away and enticed. But observe the breaking down of principle and the beautifying of deformity by which the seducer tried to succeed must be done by the tempted man himself, and that which has been tried upon him

The arts of  
the  
self-seducer.

from the world without, must now be transacted within him, in the region of his own will and of his own desire; for a man is *not tempted* until he is "drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." We are transferred here to a scene where it is no longer one man tempting another,

but where it is a man tempting himself, where he is trying to break down his own principles to persuade himself into the belief that deformity is beauty, to draw himself away from the safety and security of Divine principle, to entice himself into the embrace of what after all he cannot but suspect will

**Man tempts himself.**

be his ruin. It would seem as if we were speaking

fancifully here, were we not conscious that there was this terrible twofoldness within us, by which one of us can be both the tempted and the tempter; by which we can both entice and resist the enticement; by which the flesh can lust against the spirit, and the spirit can lust against the flesh. "I would like to do it! Yes,

**The two voices.** but it would be wrong!" "It isn't so very wrong, is it? I am sure I have no wrong intention in wishing to do it!" "I would do it if I could just be sure that I wasn't doing anything that wasn't quite right." "I don't think it is wrong; at least I am not wronging anybody in doing it, and I would like to do it!" And when the woman saw—*when she was*

*blinded, enamoured, into seeing*—when she saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise—she was "drawn away of her own lust, and enticed"; she became her own tempter, she tempted her own will to embrace her own evil desire; and the union of will and evil desire is the consummation of sin. The man within, which is the *will*, is drawn away and enticed by the harlot, desire; and when the will, of its own free choice, submits to, consents to our desire; when inclination has become choice; when prompting to sin has become the purpose of sin; when desire has become determination—then, in the startling, terrific metaphor of the apostle, the lust has conceived and has brought forth sin; ay, and it only needs that sin should be finished to bring forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren, the representation is true, startlingly true to the consciousness of us all. Our evil desires have tempted our wills. These wills of ours have resisted the solicitations, they have resisted strenuously and long, and still they have been plied by the evil desires till principle has been broken down, evil has put on the aspect of good, the will has consented, submitted, and we have been drawn away of our own



lust and enticed; lust has conceived and has brought forth sin.

There is yet one other step in the process, one other chapter in the natural history of sin. Sin is the child of desire and will; but sin in her turn has a hateful progeny of her own. In the  
**Sin brings forth death.** very nature of sin, in its very essence, so as naturally to be developed from it, is death—death which is the total separation of the sinning soul from God, the original source of its life. When the will, at the solicitation of evil desire, and, out of love to it, turned itself away from God, it at the same time made choice of everything that was involved in this turning away. Everything that the will now did, had in it that which was opposed to the life of God, to the holiness of God, to the purity of God; that is, everything that the will now did had in it death. Death to the spiritual nature; eternal death—the second death. “Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

And all this may be done, often is done, in a moment of time. The sudden solicitation of desire, the ready consent of the will,  
**No protracted process.** the consummated sin, the bringing forth of death! “The debates of the soul are quick and soon ended, and that may be done in little more than an instant that may undo us for ever.” They speak of inevitable law! It is here in the realm of spiritual life; the law of God, the revealed law of God, the experienced law of God! A man may as well think to flee from his shadow as to escape the working of this law; it belongs to him, as part now of his very being; he carries death within him because he carries sin; and if there be not One who can destroy both sin and death, he must himself abide with sin and death for ever.

Note well here that the apostle is speaking of this terrible human experience to Christian men and women; to those who  
**These things are spoken to Christian men.** have escaped, but who have not wholly escaped the corruption of this world; that he is warning such against the temptations with which even they will assail themselves to draw away and entice their wills, their true selves, to do that which brings forth sin and death. The warning was not uncalled for, is never uncalled for. Sin

may no longer *reign over* the believer in Him who has destroyed sin; but the *remains* of it are yet there, the motions of sin in his members are not yet stopped, desire still lives, still asserts itself, still entices the will; and Christian men, believers in God, he who wrote the fifty-first Psalm, and many more beside, have had cause to rue the day when they allowed themselves to be drawn away from the shelter of Divine principles, away out to where the glamour of sin dazzled and misled them, enticed them into the sins which soon banished all the glamour, and left them in the cold chilly dawn of a cold chilly day with the memories of innocence lying behind them, to be only memories henceforth for ever!

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.—“The *living* faith, which is the formal cause of our justification, is a compound, an assent of the understanding to the truth of what God reveals, and a co-existing going forth of the will, approving of and choosing it. Now this is wholly independent of *good works*. Let time indeed be given, and this principle will necessarily produce good works, but still by a *necessary accident*. It is not, I mean, the *future* production of good works which makes the difference between the one and the other, but the *present* difference of the will. The man may die before he has had time to produce one good work; yet his living faith is not made to have been dead, by Christ. You show me two seeds; one is a dead seed, the other a living. I cannot see the difference; so I say, ‘Plant them, and then the living seed *will grow* ;’ but it is not this after-growing which constitutes its life. It was just as much alive before it began to grow. The living principle within made it unlike the dead seed, only my infirmity prevented my being able to detect it. So in faith. The living faith, before the least possibility of working, is wholly different from the dead faith, and God sees this; and the man in whom it is, is freely and as much justified as if he had worked ever so much.”—BISHOP WILBERFORCE.

## Germs of Thought.

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### Pharaoh's Question and Jacob's Answer.

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"HOW OLD ART THOU?"—*Genesis* xlvii. 8.

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HERE is an interesting glimpse of what we probably may call "Court life" in that far-off land and time. (A presentation at "Court." Pharaoh—Joseph—Jacob—describe briefly the scene.)

Pharaoh a common title of the Egyptian rulers until the Persian invasion. Meaning of word similar to "king." Used as a proper name as we say "The Emperor." Several mentioned in Holy Scriptures. The one here mentioned was, probably, a benevolent man. Joseph naturally proud of his wise and saintly father, presented him to the king. Pharaoh specially struck with the venerable appearance of the patriarch.

Old age deeply revered in the East and in ancient times. (Examples—the Athenians) cf. Lev. xix. 32; Isaiah iii. 5. Should be so in the present day. Want of reverence towards the aged shews an ill regulated mind, and is also a premonition of the decay of the true spirit of any nation. (cf. the thoughtful sermon of Dr. Martineau in "*Endeavours after the Christian Life*" on *Old Age*.)

(a) The *question* of the text very common, yet solemn and deep with meaning. It is one we should often take into account in moments of quiet self-introspection.

(b) The *answer* very pathetic, and seasoned with grace and truth. A great lesson suggested to the mind of the "royal questioner." In temporal grandeur how far the king was above his poor aged subject. But the spiritual power and beauty of the subject eclipsed all that royalty possessed. This question is applicable at all times. It is specially so now. The flight of time, its changes and responsibilities are forced upon our thoughts. Life, destiny, immortality are themes which speak to us very distinctly at this special service. (The last night of what we call "another year.")

All portions of life, like the seasons in the course of the material world, have their beauties and advantages.

“’Twas sweet to live when life was fresh and young ;  
It would be sweet to live if life was old,  
And watch, while the faint current ebbed its last,  
With calm dim eyes through softened mists of age  
The heavenly headlands heaving slow in sight.”

A ripe old age may be a “crown of glory” though outwardly it may seem dark and unlovely. It may be an autumn of calm fruitfulness if the previous seasons have been improved. Many will be the advantages such a closing period of life will reap, *e. g.* (*a*) delightful memories, (*b*) wisdom built upon experience, (*c*) courage for the future, (*d*) bright prospects. Old age will reveal how the spring time of life was valued. Consider the question and answer of the text :—

I.—LIFE IS A PILGRIMAGE. Jacob’s life was literally such. Ours is such in many ways. The Scriptures are full of references to such a fact. The illustration may be very trite, but the truth illustrated is very solemn. The *continuous, resistless, irrettraceable* aspect of life. Well says the Spanish poet—

“Treading on the solid ground  
Man perpetual movement makes,  
And each footstep that he takes  
Falls on his sepulchral mound !  
Sentence, that may well confound  
Every heart, it is to know  
That each step must forward go,  
And, that onward step once taken,  
By stern law must stand unshaken,  
God Himself cannot say No.”—

“*The Stedfast Prince*,” by Calderon.

We are journeying, then, but *whither* ? What *object* have we in view ? In what *spirit* do we pursue our journey ?

II.—LIFE’S PILGRIMAGE IS SHORT. Jacob’s life at this time had reached 130 years. (See chap. xlvii. 28.) How long that life



seems when compared to our present "three score and ten, and, perchance, four score." But even then, life was shortening, for Jacob had not attained to the age of his forefathers. So our lives, even when extended to their longest duration, seem short (*cf.* Dr. Newman's Sermon on *Lapse of Time*). How brief is life! Another trite saying, but how difficult to learn and remember its practical value! How this is enforced if we ask *Nature*! The mountains, &c., how aged in comparison with "short-lived man"! *Science*, the cycles in preparing this planet as a home for man, taught by geology, &c. *History*, our forefathers, their chivalry, &c. How many generations of worshippers has this ancient and historic Church contained. \* Those monuments on the wall—the records of the deeds of the knightly Crusaders, &c. How very short, if we think of the endless Being, God, the Author of our life, &c.

III.—LIFE IS A PILGRIMAGE, LARGELY MINGLED WITH EVIL. Jacob could well speak about the "evil" of his "days." (Illustrate from his life Bethel, Esau, Rachel, &c.) Life has many pleasures. The intention of the Divine Being that we should be creatures of pleasures. All things made to minister for this. Still "unmixed" joy is not the lot of man. Clouds, as well as sunshine; tears, as well as smiles. No need for despondency here. All is right. Less than our deserts. "Why should a living man complain?" We know that "good will be the final goal of ill" (*cf.* Tennyson—*In Memoriam*).

APPLICATION.—Turn this life to its best account. It is not "length of days" merely that makes life. Form noble resolutions. Keep before you grand aims. Do noble deeds. Seek to bless yourself and others. Keep close to the strong, wise, and powerful Companion and Guide; He will give an entrance to "the city that hath foundations," the dwellers in which never "grow old," for "there is no death there."

JAMES FOSTER, B.A.

RECTOR OF ANTHORPE, LINCOLNSHIRE.

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\* The monuments to the ancient family of the Trevelyan (descendants of Sir W. Raleigh) whose motto is "Time tryeth truth."

## Love; its Praise and its Ideal.

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"DESIRE EARNESTLY THE GREATER GIFTS, AND A STILL MORE EXCELLENT WAY SHEW I UNTO YOU . . . . THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE."—1 *Cor.* xii. 31. xiii. 13. (*R. V.*)

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THE central quality of true manhood is Love, That is what Christ taught. One of His most frequent lessons was that of Love. He taught that Love is the chief glory of human character, even as it is the supreme glory of the Divine.

The pre-eminence of Love over gifts and over the other Christian graces is also the teaching of St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John. Unlike in their intellectual power and training, in their methods of teaching, in their type of character, they still agree in exalting Love over all and above all. St. John sees the whole of human goodness and truth summed up in Love: it is the central sun whence all light and life and power and beauty flow, without which there is darkness and chaos and death. "God is Love," he writes: "This is the message that ye heard from the beginning that ye should love one another." "He that loveth not abideth in death." "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." St. Peter gives Love the same high place. In his own way he depicts the manifoldness of the Christian character—courage, knowledge, self-control, patience—but the crowning grace of all, the one that adds completeness and glory to the life is Love. "Above all things being fervent in your Love." The highest strain, however, in praise of Love is reached by St. Paul. "You may covet gifts, but after all there is something more worth longing for than the wisdom of a prophet, or the voice of an angel, or the visions of a seer, and that is Love. Even though you have eloquence and can understand all mysteries and have all knowledge, even though you have all faith and can remove mountains, even though you have good works and give all your goods to feed the poor and your body to be burned as a martyr, and have not Love, you are nothing." "You are," says St. Paul, "but sounding brass and a clanging cymbal;"

empty, harsh, unbeautiful, useless! His delineation of Love, what it is in itself, how it is greater than gifts, how it will outlast knowledge and prophecy, and abide in the perfect life of the future, this description is rich, musical, inspiring as a poem, and vivid, graphic as a picture. Love is unfolded with the living touch of a spiritual Master; every stroke brings out some fresh feature of its sacred beauty and its matchless dignity, and it shines before the mind, the supreme quality of all goodness, the Queen of all the graces. "Love," says St. Paul, "suffers long and is kind." Love does not envy; Love does not boast, and is not vain; Love does not behave itself unseemly, is never rude or overbearing or careless about hurting others' feelings by hard words and looks; Love does not seek its own, is not always looking after its own rights and thinking about itself and trying to help itself; Love is not easily provoked, does not take account of evil, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth, is not glad, as too many are, to see people stumble, and does not look on and feast its eyes with the sight of their faults, but tries to discover what is good in them, and is glad at every little deed of righteousness it finds; Love covereth all things, what evil it cannot help seeing, it does not talk about, making scandal and criticism, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, looks at the bright side as long as it can, does not give up any one as altogether bad, restrains anger and revenge, and is merciful and forgiving to the last. "Faith, Hope, Love abideth," says St. Paul, "these three, but the greatest of these is Love."

The great heart, tender, pitiful, patient, benevolent, rejoicing with those who rejoice, and weeping with those who weep, long-suffering, is the perfection of human character. He who by his gifts and accomplishments takes rank among the world's scholars and heroes and great ones, is yet without the truest greatness if his heart be narrow and cold. The noblest man in God's eyes is the man whose love is largest and deepest. "Rejoice not," Christ once said to the disciples, who found that they could do wonderful works and were glad because of that, "rejoice not that you can do such things, but rather rejoice that your names are written in

heaven." And that which gets a man's name written in the book of heaven is goodness. The eloquence that reaches up to the ear of God is the word that helps and cheers a brother man in the battle and pilgrimage of this mortal life. None of the gifts that God bestows are to be undervalued; force of intellect is not, nor is courage, nor is wisdom, nor is fame, nor is beauty, nor is rank. That is a false asceticism that thrusts these things away as vain and empty. They are all of use in the work and progress of the world. God says to us, keep them, covet them, employ them, they are My gifts to you. And yet it is not in these things that manhood finds its Divine fullness, but in the grace of Love.

Picture a man whose delight is to bless the needy, and the erring, and the sinful, and to do this at the sacrifice of himself. He carries into the lanes and bye-ways of society the ministries of Love. Giving bread to the hungry, succour to the weak, sympathy to the sad, redemption to the fallen; being eyes to the blind, mind to the ignorant, a refuge to the homeless and wicked, buffeted and tossed from pillar to post in the dark places of the world, his life is poured out like the serene light of heaven around the bedside of the sick and the squalid hearth of the poor. He comes like a brother near to the dying, bringing back reminiscences of good thoughts and desires and struggles that have been in the past, and guiding the lingering spirit up to the great Father, who never closes the door of His house against any of His children. His presence is like that alabaster box of ointment, very precious, which Mary broke over the blessed Lord, and which filled the house with its odour. Not content with doing good to those whom friendship or kinship binds to him, his love enlarges and flows forth like a stream of living water, causing many a social wilderness and solitary place to be glad, and many a desert to blossom as the rose. He has got beyond the state in which self-sacrifice is felt to be a man's duty, and has reached the bright side of self-sacrifice and sees it to be blessed and joyous. Such a man is one whom God calls great and noble. He is honoured with a place among heaven's chosen ones. In the presence of such a man, the man of intellect, the man of genius, even the man of conscience must take a lower place.



The ideal degree of Love is as yet far above the best man. There are masterpieces in sculpture, painting, architecture; in poetry and music, though these are few. But in Love men have not yet reached the ideal mark; they are at best only learners of the Divine art. Yet the capacity for the highest degree of Love is in man—in every man. And that is a prophecy that one day the actual will attain to the height of the ideal. The world has more Love in it now than in the past. In the progress of mankind love takes continually a higher place; what was adequate and noble once is not so now. The roots of this Tree of Paradise are striking deeper into the world, and the branches are spreading farther out; it is becoming a great tree, “bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.” Long since prophets proclaimed their visions of a time when all hate should cease, when peace should fill the earth, when even the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid should dwell together. Were those visions the wild fancies of deluded men? Were they not rather the fore-gleams of a far-off Divine order, towards which all things do tend. Hitherto the men of force and war and wealth have reigned, and the men of love have been few and obscure; but so it shall not be for ever; slowly this is becoming inverted, the stern rule of might is being displaced by the gentle reign of goodness, and the kingdom of selfishness is receding before the kingdom of Love.

Once, however, in the world’s history the ideal of Love has been reached. Jesus not only taught the lesson of Love, but in His own life gave a perfect example of His teaching. He came to seek and to save the lost, not to destroy them, and to lose His own life, not to save it. He lived in daily contact with want and ignorance and vulgarity and sin; and He saw the needy to relieve them, the ignorant to teach them, the vulgar to ennoble them, the sinful to awaken in them a sense of sin and to elevate them to God. He could not pause in His wondrous life of doing good. His Love was as a fire in His soul urging Him ever onward, and leading Him to say, “*I must work.*” He sought out the poor, who had nobody to comfort them; the sick, who had

nobody to heal them; the despised outcasts, who had never received any word of teaching and sympathy from priests and scribes. He poured out His great heart to them all in words of tenderness and hope that thrilled them with joy, and they turned and blessed Him who had come to speak such human words to their hungry human souls. He came for the sake of the worst, not for the sake of the righteous, to cure the sick, not to save the healthy. This life of ideal Love separated Him from the sympathy of His age. The men of culture and rank and influence could not understand Him. His motives were beyond their comprehension. To the last they were puzzled and bewildered by His love. He must, they thought, be a bad man or He would not care so much for bad men. They commonly sought the society of the rich and great. He, that of the poor and lowly. They associated with the respectable and temple-going classes; He was the friend of publicans and sinners. They made religion to consist in forms, ritual, in the observance of artificial ordinances; He summed up all the law and prophets in Love to God and Love to man. They thought that God loved only the good, and that they were godly as they were narrow and exclusive. He taught that God is the Father of prodigals, and, in His Father's name, He drew them around Him. Even Christ's disciples could not understand His Love all at once. They tried to hinder little children from coming to Him. They rebuked the blind man who called after Him. How could the Great Prophet of Nazareth stoop to trouble Himself about such poor insignificant people? They could not conceive, either, why Jesus should be willing to go up to Jerusalem, and be taken by the rulers and be crucified; it seemed foolish self-sacrifice. They were shocked at His words,—“The Son of Man must suffer.” “That be far from Thee, Lord,” said Peter. “We hoped it was He which should redeem Israel,” said the two disciples, on their way to Emmaus. But, although misunderstood and opposed, now by foes and now by friends, He went on His way of mercy and blessing, and on the cross and crowned with thorns, He finished the work the Father had given Him to do.

As we live near to Him we shall catch His spirit. The old

story concerning the tomb of Orpheus, who was so skilled in music, was that the nightingale that built her nest nearest to the tomb had always the sweetest song. If we live in communion with Him, whose whole life was Love, we, too, shall learn to live a life like His, and to cultivate the grace which is "chief among the blessed three." "Faith, Hope, Love abideth, but the greatest of these is Love."

BRISTOL.

THOMAS HAMMOND.

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### Life's Retrospect and Prospect.

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"I AM NOW READY TO BE OFFERED, &c."—2 *Tim.* iv. 6-8.

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WHEN Paul wrote these words he was just coming face to face with death. He was in his prison cell, and only awaiting the word of the Roman Emperor who should hurry him forth to martyrdom. Meanwhile he dictates this letter to Timothy, his son in the faith; and now the letter is almost finished, there are but some few exhortations to give and salutations to send; he is charging the youthful Timothy to fulfil his ministry, and so take up the work which he is laying down, when suddenly, as in a very inspiration of rapture, he exclaims, "For I am now ready to be offered," &c.

How grand it is, especially when looked at in the light of the apostle's circumstances and surroundings. And how comprehensive: there seems to be gathered up with it all the service of his past life, and all his hope of the future. It is full of *retrospect* and *prospect*. Consider the way in which Paul speaks of both.

I.—RETROSPECT. When a man feels he is nearing his end he will almost certainly cast a look back on life. Nor will he be likely to over-colour his view of it. Life will appear to him very much as it really has been; certainly it would to a good and true man like Paul. Look then at his summing up of life; the three-fold aspect in which he views it, and in which every man may view it.

1. As a *fight*. It is but trite to say that a man's foes are the world, the flesh, and the devil. A man's real foe, after all, is himself. Nothing in the world without a man could do him real harm if he had not the world-spirit in him. It is the Satanic thought which a man is only too apt to entertain, against which he has to contend. And as to the flesh, that is a very unphilosophical religion which, beginning from without instead of from within, sets a man to mortify his body, when the seat of the disorder is in the carnal mind.

Let us look to *ourselves*, and fight with our depraved passions, fight to keep a clear conscience and a pure heart. Some may have to fight for truth against a tendency to falsehood, a habit of equivocation or exaggeration. Others will have to fight for honesty against a tendency to swerve from the straightforward in dealings with others. Yet others, for purity against impure propensities, &c.

2. As a *race*. "I have finished the course." The apostle refers to the Grecian athletes pressing on to the goal, and he had said to himself, the Christian life is like that. What is the object the Christian athlete has to pursue in this race? Let Paul himself tell us. "I press toward the mark . . . not as though I had already attained, either were already *perfect*." So, then, it is a race after the perfection of manhood which the Christian has to run. As the good fight is a contest against evil, so the Christian course is a striving after goodness. This is a very definite object; how is it to be attained? By diligently cultivating the spirit or disposition desired. It is here as in the formation of habits, the way to form them is persistently to do the thing you wish to become a habit. So is the Christian life a continual following of all the holy graces. It is to be pure and increasing in purity, loving, meek, patient, devout, &c.

3. As a *stewardship*. "I have kept the faith." "I was put in trust with the gospel." "Let a man so account of us as stewards," &c. Now it is required of every Christian that he hold firmly the truths by which he became a Christian. The place where the gospel is preserved for the world is in the heart of the Christian. If the Bible were in the world without intellects and hearts



holding its truths, it would soon become an obsolete book. God put His truth into human hearts before He put it into a book. He means that the faith should be kept in the hearts of Christians.

Such is Paul's retrospect; is it the retrospect we can take of life so far as it may have gone with us?

II.—PROSPECT. Here Paul turns right round, and says, "Henceforth." Such has life been by the grace of God, but "henceforth." "Henceforth" what? Life higher, nobler, more glorious than the past has been. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." Think of a man asking himself, as Paul did, while death is waiting, what has the past been, and what will the future be *to me*? Remember that what the future will be to a man is determined by what his past has been. What a prospect, what a grand lookout beyond death and the grave is this of Paul the aged!

1. How *distinct*. Paul does not say, "Henceforth, though my spirit may exist I know not what or where I shall be." He saw life before him—*life at its best*—life crowned! We shall never live till we die. As it has been grandly said, "Death is but a contrivance for gaining more life."

"When from flesh the spirit freed,  
Hastens homeward to return—  
Mortals say, A man is dead;  
Angels sing, A child is born!"

Born into the higher life of humanity.

2. How *glorious*. He looks forward to "that day" when his life should be crowned with righteousness. All his Christian life the man has been fighting for righteousness, then he is to have it, without fighting for it. All his life he has been striving to attain to perfect love and service, then he is to have it without effort. The crown of life is life at its best—life crowned with righteousness.

J. BRANWHITE FRENCH.

LONDON.

## Seedlings.

### Days of the Christian Year.

Luke xviii. 31-34.

(Shrove Sunday).

"THEN HE TOOK UNTO HIM THE TWELVE, AND SAID UNTO THEM, BEHOLD, WE GO UP TO JERUSALEM, AND ALL THINGS THAT ARE WRITTEN BY THE PROPHETS CONCERNING THE SON OF MAN SHALL BE ACCOMPLISHED. FOR HE SHALL BE DELIVERED UNTO THE GENTILES, AND SHALL BE MOCKED, AND SPITEFULLY ENTREATED, AND SPITTED ON: AND THEY SHALL SCOURGE HIM, AND PUT HIM TO DEATH: AND THE THIRD DAY HE SHALL RISE AGAIN. AND THEY UNDERSTOOD NONE OF THESE THINGS: AND THIS SAYING WAS HID FROM THEM, NEITHER KNEW THEY THE THINGS WHICH WERE SPOKEN."

WHEN the hour came that "Jesus took the twelve and said unto them, behold we go up to Jerusalem," the crisis of the world was at hand. For on the issue of that journey hung the redemption of our race. If the Son of Man should carry out His purpose and should do and suffer all that He was then proposing to Himself to accomplish and endure, the restoration of mankind would be secure. We think we catch an

unusual solemnity in the tone of these weighty sentences, into the meaning of which we can penetrate much farther than they on whose ears they fell. We are struck with—

I.—THE FIDELITY OF THE MASTER. The faithfulness of Jesus Christ is shewn here in (a) *His readiness to endure the most intolerable sufferings.* He knew well what was before Him. The outline of the idea of His mission was fast being filled up in His mind. As the cross drew near, it flung a deeper shadow on His path, and He was now entering into the thick darkness. He knew that immediately before Him, if He went up to Jerusalem, was (1) a *scornful rejection* by His own people; (2) *the deepest humiliation* to which a human spirit could be subjected; He was to be "mocked, spitefully entreated, spitted on;" (3) *extreme bodily pain*; He was to be "scourged," or "knouted" as we should say; (4) *death*; the Gentiles would "put Him to death." But clearly foreseeing and even vividly realizing all this, He did not hesitate as to His course; there is no trace of uncertainty in His language, "Behold we go up." (b) *His utterance of the most un-*

*palatable truths.* Jesus Christ must have known, *and must have felt* how utterly unwelcome would be such words as those He was now to address to His disciples. Nothing He could say could possibly be more opposed to their wishes, or more contrary to their expectations. This is the Teacher's severest trial; by the course He then takes is determined His fidelity or His unfaithfulness. Our Lord never shrank from speaking either profound truth which His hearers were too superficial to fathom, or even such unpalatable truth as that which He now again affirmed. (c) *His confident expectation of the most exceptional experience.* "The third day He shall rise again." This was an experience which had no precedent then except as the result of His own wonder-working power. But He had the unwavering faith which was perfectly confident that when He had undergone death itself, and when His voice could not utter the commanding "Come forth," the promise of the Father would be fulfilled and He should "rise again." These three are tests which try our fidelity now as they tried our Lord's in the days of His life on earth; our faithfulness is less than our Lord would have it be, unless it is strong enough to triumph over (1) our indisposition to suffer (2) our

unwillingness to speak unwelcome truth, and (3) our difficulty in accepting that which is not in harmony with every-day experience.

II.—THE FAULTINESS OF THE DISCIPLES. The words of the Master were not received as they should have been by the disciples. We note (a) *their spiritual obtuseness.* "They understood none of these things." Why not? Christ spoke *very plainly*; there was nothing at all hard to understand in His words. He declared His purpose *repeatedly*. He spoke *earnestly and emphatically*; there could be no manner of doubt that He meant all that He said. Yet they were so unreceptive that not only did they not anticipate what occurred, but they were dismayed and overwhelmed when the facts corresponded with His assurance. We easily discover (b) *its explanation.* The one thing which accounts for their obtuseness is *pre-occupation of mind.* Their minds were so crowded with the false theories they had imbibed that there was no room for truth to enter. Full of the popular conception of the earthly and visible kingdom which the Messiah was to establish, they could not entertain thoughts which were irreconcilable with such false fancies. When prejudice has established itself in every chamber of the soul,

truth knocks in vain for admission at the door. Do we wonder at their blindness? But are we not "in the same condemnation"? Perhaps we shall one day be as much astonished that we failed to see what Christ is plainly teaching as, in after days, the disciples must have been that they so completely missed their Master's meaning when He told them of His coming passion as they went up to Jerusalem. There is ample reason for (1) *self-examination*, (2) *renewed study* of our Lord's will as revealed in His Word, (3) *devout willingness to part with old errors* and be led into the light of unsuspected truth.

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### Matthew iv. 7.

(First Sunday in Lent.)

"THOU SHALT NOT TEMPT THE LORD THY GOD."

THE temptation through which Jesus passed as He was about to enter on His ministry brings with it many valuable lessons. It assures us of the veritable humanity of our Lord; it suggests to us the best weapon of defence with which to resist our spiritual enemies; it affirms the truth that in Divine realities, and not in fleshly comforts or in passing shows, are found the real satisfactions of the soul; it encourages

us to wait for the true and lasting triumph rather than to snatch the present and ephemeral success. Thus in the words of our text we are reminded of—

#### I.—THE ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FAITH AND PRESUMPTION.

It is one thing to *trust* God when and where He asks us to confide in Him; another thing to look for His Divine help when we have no warrant for so doing; this is to *tempt* Him. We may not always be able to distinguish the one from the other. Presumption often puts on the garments and speaks with the accents of faith, but the two are essentially different. To "have faith in God" is to confide in His goodness and care when we are in the path of obedience; to presume on His promise is to expect His help and blessing when we have forsaken that path and are walking in the way of wilfulness. But we must consider what are—

#### II.—THE POSSIBILITIES OF PRESUMPTION.

There are many ways in which we may presume, and against which it is needful to be on our guard. (1) *When we undertake to settle questions which are beyond our range.* It is permissible and even desirable that we should think on the subject of the relations between the Father the Son and the Spirit, of the way in which the Son of God was also the Son of



Man, on the harmony which exists between Divine ordination and human freedom, on the way in which the death on the cross constituted the atonement for our sin, &c., &c., &c. It is lawful to *think on* these things, but if we presume to settle them, and to dogmatize about them, and to insist upon our views as necessary and indispensable, we get into a region where we have no right to expect Divine sanction; we "tempt God," for we reckon on His guidance where we have no reason to look for it, and we practically invite Him to let His retributive laws do their work with us, and produce confusion, error, unbelief.

(2) *When we look for bodily health without obeying the laws of nature.*

The man who does not do his best to breathe pure air, to take necessary exercise, to eat wholesome food, to restrain carnal appetite, to cultivate a cheerful spirit is "tempting God," he is presuming on goodness which he has no right to anticipate: he is inviting feebleness, sickness, premature departure.

(3) *When we expect sufficient means without diligent labour and moderation in enjoyment.*

In act, if not in word, we challenge Divine law to operate against us and lead us down to embarrassment and dishonour. (4) *When we hope for admission into the kingdom of God and postpone earnest application*

*for entrance.* God says to us, as plainly and emphatically as possible, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

The man, therefore, who is for years deliberately sowing to the flesh, with the secret hope that he will yet "reap life everlasting" is guiltily and perilously presuming on Divine long-suffering; he is "tempting God" to enforce His holy law and to make the transgressor "reap corruption." (5)

*When we expect steadfastness and growth, while we neglect the sources of spiritual strength.*

To wait upon the Lord in all the forms and offices of devotion; to engage in active Christian usefulness; to cultivate a reverent, pure, and generous spirit; to watch with all vigilance, and to strive with all strenuousness against the inroads of evil, such are the sources of steadfastness and increase: the Christian man who systematically disregards these, and who yet expects to abide in Christ and to be found fruitful at the day of His appearing, is tempting God to visit him with a very severe loss and a very bitter disappointment.

III.—ITS HEAVY PENALTIES.

The penalty of presumption is according to its nature, just as, on the other hand, is the reward of faith (Matt. ix. 29). Its outworkings must, therefore, be manifold. Answering to the

folly and sin of the offence, they are (1) Intellectual bewilderment and ultimate unbelief. (2) Sickness and bodily death. (3) Poverty and humiliation. (4) Exclusion from the heavenly kingdom. (5) Spiritual decline and Divine reproof.

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### Matthew xxvi. 29.

(*The Second Sunday in Lent.*)

"BUT I SAY UNTO YOU, I WILL NOT DRINK HENCEFORTH OF THIS FRUIT OF THE VINE, UNTIL THAT DAY WHEN I DRINK IT NEW WITH YOU IN MY FATHER'S KINGDOM."

THESE sacred words bring before us the Lord's Supper as a Farewell. It is—

I.—A Farewell YET A FESTIVAL. The eating together, the singing of the appointed paschal psalms, some of whose strains are of jubilant rapture, combine to justify one of the great names by which the service is widely known in the Church of Christ—the Eucharist. This Supper is a Festival (1) Because it is a *banquet of victory*. (2) *Itself a gift of love and a token of yet higher gifts of love*. For it indicates God's loving gift of Christ to man; Christ's loving gift of Himself to each heart; our

loving gift of ourselves to Christ, and to each other for His sake.

II.—A Farewell YET A MEMORIAL. Though going, He is not to be unremembered. This is His "Forget-Me-Not" to the human heart. His own words like letters of golden thread interwoven across this ordinance are, "In Memory of Me."

III.—A Farewell yet a SYMBOL OF ABIDING PRESENCE. Christians are gathered, not around a tomb to mourn a dead Christ, but about a table to commune with the living Christ. Our Lord's words, now and always, have made the Cross on which for a few hours He was fastened, and not the Crucifix on which He is perpetually nailed, the true symbol of our holy religion. And His use of the bread and the wine indicate a living union with a living Christ.

IV.—A Farewell yet a PLEDGE OF COMPLETE RE-UNION. Christ links the Lord's Supper with the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in Heaven. How often has "the last communion" of some dying sufferer seemed to catch the radiance and to ante-date the place of Heaven itself. The Lord's Supper is charged with elements which only need transfiguration of spiritual reality to become Heaven.

EDITOR.

**Luke xi. 21, 22.**

(*The Third Sunday in Lent.*)

"WHEN THE STRONG MAN FULLY ARMED GUARDETH HIS OWN COURT, HIS GOODS ARE IN PEACE: BUT WHEN A STRONGER THAN HE SHALL COME UPON HIM, AND OVERCOME HIM, HE TAKETH FROM HIM HIS WHOLE ARMOUR WHEREIN HE TRUSTED, AND DIVIDETH HIS SPOILS."—(*R. V.*)

THE argument of our Lord in reply to the base and blasphemous suggestion that He was casting out devils by the devil, is, "He that is strong can only be overcome by a stronger." The evil spirit, whose existence Christ assumes, has, our Lord virtually says, been just overmastered and expelled by Me in your presence; therefore, I am stronger than he. The figure our Saviour here employs teaches several truths about the devil's power over man.

I.—IT IS THE POWER OF A STRONG BEING. We may conclude this (1) *From our own experiences and introspections.* (2) *From the history of our race.* (3) *From the general testimony of Scripture,* both in the names by which it denominates the devil—*e.g.* dragon, old serpent, lion, prince of this world, prince of the power of the air, &c., and in the devastation it describes him as having wrought, *e.g.* brought sin into the world,

&c. (4) *From the name Christ here gives him.* "The strong." All this justifies the words Mrs. Browning puts into Satan's mouth;—

"I, too, have strength—  
Strength to behold God, and not  
worship Him;  
Strength to fall from Him, and not cry  
on Him,  
Strength to be in the universe, and yet  
Neither God nor His servant."

II.—It is the power of a strong being EQUIPPED FOR HIS MISSION. "Armed." We may not think of the spirit of evil as simply so much cumbersome, unwieldy strength. He is prepared for battle; hence we are summoned to be prepared "with the whole armour of God." The means he uses are called "wiles," "depths," "darts," "snares," "all deceivableness of unrighteousness." He is "armed" with the customs of trade, the usages of society, the half-truths of infant science. He is armed with idolatries, superstitions, hypocrisies. He is armed with men and women, for humanity is the great weapon by which evil tempts humanity.

III.—It is a power OVER A VERY PRECIOUS POSSESSION. Whether we read according to the revised version, "court," or the older version, "palace," we have a similar suggestion as to the dignity and worth of the property evil guards as its own. Every man is such a

property ; in body, in intellect, in heart, what is he but a royal court, a capacious and majestic palace ? The structure is "fearfully and wonderfully made," and within are "goods" that are simply priceless—*e.g.* reason, memory, love are there.

IV.—It is SOMETIMES THE COMPLETE POWER OF A STRONG ONE OVER A PRECIOUS POSSESSION. Whether we read with the revised version, "guardeth his own court," or "keepeth," the thought is the same. It is as though the property were completely held, the province securely possessed. "The man is carnal, sold under sin." So it sometimes seems to be. There are human faces so depraved that the very flag of hell seems to float from the citadel ; there are natures so systematically and unvaryingly selfish or corrupt,

that it seems as though evil held undisputed and pacific sway. Such a state is (a) *Terrible*. Better the bloodiest war than such a tyranny. (b) *Gradually reached*. What surrounding sentinels have to be massacred, what innate defenders of right have to be overpowered. It is a fatal peace.

V.—The power of this strong one CAN BE ONLY DISTURBED BY A STRONGER. The gospel heralds the Advent, and chronicles the early achievements, and the history of the Church records the subsequent victories of the STRONGER ONE, even the Christ who alone can subdue and expel the spirit of evil. This Strong Son of God is "the Death of Death, and hell's Destruction." Shall He be welcomed or resisted by you ?

EDITOR.

### Worship the Duty of all Peoples.

"O PRAISE THE LORD, ALL YE NATIONS : PRAISE HIM, ALL YE PEOPLE. FOR HIS MERCIFUL KINDNESS IS GREAT TOWARD US : AND THE TRUTH OF THE LORD ENDURETH FOR EVER. PRAISE YE THE LORD."—*Psalm cxvii*.

"This psalm, which occupies exactly the middle place in the Holy Scriptures, is the shortest. It contains the lyrical expression

of the consciousness of the Old Testament Church. (1) That it was the object of the special and everlasting care of God. (2) That the former proceeded from His mercy, the latter from His truth. (3) That for this very reason Jehovah is the worthy object of praise for all peoples. The truth that all nations should yet worship Jehovah as the God who has



revealed Himself to the world by means of what He did for Israel, is unfolded by the apostle Paul (Rom. xv. 11) from the germs herein contained. The special occasion of the composition of the psalm cannot be ascertained. The supposition that it was the victory of which the preceding and following psalms are supposed to treat has nothing for its support. The style is liturgical and, therefore, this is often called a temple psalm, sung either at the beginning or at the end of the service, or by separate choirs, or by the whole people in the interval between longer psalms. Many MSS. and editions annex it to the following psalm."—*Dr. MacCurdy.*

HOMILETICS.—This, the smallest of all the psalms, is not in a spiritual sense the least. Its spirit, indeed, runs through all the devout psalms and pulsates in all godly souls. Nothing is more absurd, at the same time more common, than to estimate the merits of a composition by the number of its words or the amount of type it occupies on a page; and yet in literature the thoughtless are ever doing this. They estimate the worth of a book by its size rather than by its sentiments, by its weight rather than by its thoughts. As a rule the more wordy an author is, the weaker as a thinker. It is a characteristic of great minds that

they can put as much thought into a few sentences as ordinary men could not put into as many pages, if, indeed, they could put them at all. Verbosity is generally the effect and evidence of mental vacuity. When the time comes—as come it must—that men will judge aright books and preachers, ninety-nine volumes out of a hundred that stream from the press will be left to rot, and those preachers who now by loud and redundant vocalisations crowd their churches will be left in desolation. *Robert Hall* used to speak of men who had an "ocean of words and a spoonful of ideas."

"Words are the motes of thought, and nothing more;  
Words are like sea-shells on the shore: they show  
Where the mind ends, and not how far it has been.  
Let every thought, too, soldier-like be stripped  
And roughly looked over."—*Festus.*

The psalm teaches that WORSHIP IS THE DUTY OF ALL PEOPLES. "*O praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise Him, all ye people.*"

I.—ALL PEOPLES ARE TO WORSHIP THE SAME GOD. There is One God and only One. Nature, conscience, and the Bible demonstrate the doctrine of monotheism. "I am the Lord, there is none else; I even the Lord am He, there is none else." "Of Him,

and through Him, and to Him are all things." If all peoples are to worship the same God, then—First: *All are identical in spiritual condition.* They all have a capacity to form a conception of the same God, and the same tendency to reverence and adore. This undoubtedly they have. Great and multiform as are the points that distinguish the various races of men on the face of the globe, they all agree in this, they have a capacity and a tendency for worship. Secondly: *All have identical moral relationships.* They all feel themselves to be absolutely dependent upon God, not only for existence, but for all the necessities and blessedness of existence. So it is, God is no Respector of persons, He sustains the same relations to all. "In Him all live and move and have their being." Thirdly: *All should have identical controlling sympathies.* The reigning sympathies of all should be on one and the same object—God. Thus true worship becomes the unifying force of the race. The race is riven into divisions, and these divisions are often hostile one to another. The supreme want of the human world is union. What can effect this? Nothing but the worship of the One God. Let the supreme sympathy of all souls flow in one channel, to One

Great Object, and this is true union.

II.—ALL PEOPLES ARE TO WORSHIP THE SAME GOD FOR THE SAME REASON. Two reasons are given here. First: His *kindness* to all. "*For His merciful kindness is great toward all.*" "The Lord is good to all and His tender mercies are over all the works of His hands." His goodness, like the heavens, encircles the race. "He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." Another reason here given is—Secondly: His *faithfulness* to all. "*The truth of the Lord endureth for ever.*" God is Truth, hence He never alters. Error is like the clouds, ever shifting; truth, like the sun, continues the same from age to age. He is Truth, hence there is a firm foundation for all who trust Him. Whatever He has said must come to pass. "For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: Thou hast established the earth and it abideth." These two reasons for worship apply alike to all. He is "*merciful,*" and by His mercy *all* live. He is faithful, and on His word all may depend.

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## Breviaries.

### The Best Thing.

"BUT GOD COMMENDETH HIS LOVE TOWARD US, IN THAT, WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US."—*Romans* v. 8.

I.—THE BEST THING COMMENDED. "The love of God to man." Not His wisdom, power, holiness, or wealth, but His love, unsolicited, unmerited, free, unparalleled, toward us, the most undeserving of His creatures. II.—The best thing commended BY THE BEST JUDGE. "God commendeth His love." "God only knows the love of God." A man may know the love of man, an angel may know the love of an angel, but only the Infinite can gauge the Infinite. III.—The best thing commended by the best Judge IN THE BEST POSSIBLE WAY. "In that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." While we were at the worst He did the best for us. "He died for the ungodly." "He tasted death for every man." "He came to seek and to save that which was lost." IV.—The best thing commended by the best Judge in the best possible way, AND FOR THE BEST PURPOSE. That we might be "justified by His blood"; "saved from wrath"; "reconciled to God by the death of His Son," and "saved by His life"; yea, "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ"; in a word, have everlasting life.

GREENOCK.

D. BROTCHE.

### Christ in the Home.

"IT WAS NOISED THAT HE WAS IN THE HOUSE."—*Mark* ii. 1.

A CHRISTLESS home is exposed to all manner of danger. No locks or fastenings to keep out the enemy. It is cold, dark, cheerless; the spiritual atmosphere depressing and fraught with contagious malaria. Learn from the narrative— I.—That Christ in the home CANNOT BE HID. "It was noised that He was in." The homes where Christ dwells are known by the neighbours. It becomes (1) *An attraction*. "Many were gathered." (a) *He develops and fosters those traits of character in His people which attract the confidence and win the admiration of the world.* (b) *By its teaching.* "He preached." But since His ascension His most

powerful and convincing discourses come from the hearts and homes of His people. (2) *He, Himself, is the great attraction.* "I, if I be lifted up." Christ in the home sweetens and hallows family intercourse, and makes it a radiating centre of attraction and blessing to the community.

II.—THAT CHRIST IN THE HOME IS A GREAT BLESSING TO THOSE OUTSIDE. "Many were gathered together." (1) *For "many" to be drawn together under the personal influence of Christ is itself a blessing.* Some who come sick will be healed, and some who come to scoff will learn to pray. (2) *Mastering the difficulties in the way to Christ is a blessing.* "No room." It calls for extraordinary effort, and thus reveals and strengthens the heart's purpose. "They uncovered the roof." Weak purpose never would have thought of the roof. The *top* of intervening obstacles can be scaled, nay, turned into an open door by the man who has made up his mind to find Jesus Christ. Christ able to bless those that are outside as well as in. Always able to repeat Himself. Can meet the highest expectations (a) *In healing.* "Sick of the palsy." However bed-ridden a man may be by the palsy of sin, Christ can heal him. (b) *In salvation.* "Thy sins be forgiven." CONCLUSION.—Have you taken Him into your heart, your home? If so, you may well rejoice; but if not, oh, be in earnest and secure Him. He now stands knocking at the door.

PHILADELPHIA.

THOS. KELLY.

## The Soul's Duty in Relation to the Divine Drawings.

"DRAW ME, WE WILL RUN AFTER THEE."—*Song of Solomon* i. 4.

I.—MAN NEEDS TO BE DIVINELY DRAWN TO GOD. (1) *He is far away from God in heart, life, and purpose.* (2) *Has no inclination to return.* (3) *Is every moment wandering farther.* (4) *His understanding needs to be enlightened, his affections to be won, his will changed, and his whole life and being drawn God-ward.* II.—GOD IS EVER SEEKING TO DRAW MEN TO HIMSELF. (1) *By loving words.* (2) *By merciful deeds.* (3) *By gracious revelations of Himself and of His purposes, as in Christ His Son.* (4) *By the influences of His Holy Spirit.* III.—MAN'S PROPER ATTITUDE IN RELATION TO THE DIVINE DRAWINGS. Here is—(1) *A sense of need.* (2) *Candid acknowledgement of it.* (3) *Earnest prayer—"Draw me."* (4) *A spirit of obedience—"and we will run after Thee."* (5) *Eager desire to come to God with all possible diligence—"we will run after Thee."*

GILLINGHAM.

THOMAS HAYNES.



## Pulpit Handmaids.

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### The Voice of the Bible in Relation to War.

THE subject of war in relation to the Bible must have been often discussed. Amid the many topics which have occupied the minds of truth-seekers, it is hardly possible that it could have been neglected. Its *importance*, were there nothing else, must have attracted inquiry. I need not, therefore, expect to advance anything new. Indeed it is hardly possible to be original on any subject at the present day. But though disclaiming the merit of contributing anything novel towards a settlement of the question, I may truly affirm that I have read no book professing to treat of war in connexion with the Bible. There must be such, though I am unacquainted with them. I thought it better, however, not to consult them, that I might be at liberty to follow out my own suggestions and look at the subject from my own point of view. If my discourse be found deficient in breadth or comprehensiveness, it may, perhaps, have greater individuality.

The Bible is made up of two parts, the Old and New Testaments, which differ in their nature and object. On the present question it is needful not to overlook the distinction between the law of Moses and the law of Christ. The institutions and enactments of the old Jewish economy were well adapted to the end for which they were designed. As *preparatives for something better and more spiritual* they were worthy of the source from whom they proceeded. But they were necessarily imperfect. The state of society which they were meant to improve was far from perfect. The morality of the Old Testament partakes of the rudeness which characterised an uncivilized age, and falls short of the high standard of *Christian* morality; else there would have been no need for the latter. Thus we find polygamy tolerated among the Jews; liberty of divorce for many reasons, some of them comparatively trifling in the eyes of a Christian; domestic slavery sanctioned; severe punishments annexed to the want of chastity in females, and to the disobedience of children towards their parents. As to war, we find it not merely tolerated, but ascribed to God's command. His people, under the old dispensation, occupied a peculiar position as the depositaries of monotheism. From among the idolatrous nations they were singled out, to be educated in the lessons of a better worship and, therefore, to show forth the glory of Jehovah's name among the heathen. They were led in an unusual way. God manifested His presence among them by signs fitted to arrest their attention. Their pupilage was out of the common path, since they were designed to be witnesses of the power and presence of God. Hence the Divine providence towards such a people must possess features unknown to other races. We read that they were frequently commanded to destroy their enemies and not to spare. *Their* enemies were considered the enemies of God and His government, which must be eradicated. When the Psalmist said, "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee; yea, I hate them with perfect hatred," he spake as a Jew living under a dispensation in which such feelings were natural towards all except the chosen race. The economy was thus a severe one. Its regulations were painful; its jurisdiction stern, in accordance with the manners of the age. But we are reluctant to censure them, because they were adapted to educate the race at a

certain stage of the world's history. It should always be remembered that the wars of the Hebrews belonged to an epoch in which it was believed they were commanded by God. The system pursued by Divine wisdom is that of successive gradations, in no stage of which but the very highest are men's purest notions of good effectually realised. The Jewish dispensation was one stage in the Divine plan, not the ultimate one; and if it be less marked by mercy and meekness than the law of Christ, we need not be surprised at it.

These observations may suffice in relation to wars occurring in Old Testament times. Whenever the Jews engaged in such murderous enterprises in opposition to the spirit of a theocratic government they acted wrongly. And it must be confessed that most of those enterprises were unjustifiable, not excepting those said to be enjoined by Jehovah, because the writers used this language to express their own belief.

What then is the bearing of the Old Testament on the present subject? The Jews engaged in many wars offensive and defensive, often to their hurt. They believed that the former was justifiable as well as the latter. Thinking it their duty to attack and destroy nations and tribes outside their own pale, they naturally described it as God's command. *Their* enemies, and such were other races in their eyes, were considered the enemies of Jehovah. But they had narrow notions on this matter; and were only too ready to think that their ideas coincided with the Divine will. The language of the writers must, therefore, be taken with limitations. It is not easy to believe that the Most High ordained that slaughter and destruction were needful in any stage of the world's history for the accomplishment of benignant purposes towards the human race. Though the Jews fancied themselves Heaven's favourites, to the exclusion of others, their fighting and bloodshed must appear strange to the student of the Bible when he reads that Jehovah expressly commanded a warlike invasion of unoffending heathen. It is not enough to ask has God expressly commanded or sanctioned certain wars in which the Israelites engaged, as recorded in the Old Testament; and if He has they must be right; it is the duty of the inquirer to look at the language used by the writers in the light of the Divine perfections and infer that it involves a transference of their own ideas to the mind of the Eternal.

These observations may suffice in relation to war as enjoined or permitted in the Old Testament. The Hebrews were but too ready to attack others, supposing themselves specially favoured by Jehovah, and consequently commissioned to root out the idolatrous.

The testimony of the Jewish Scriptures does not appear to us favourable to war *now*. Those Scriptures are not a rule to Christians as they were to Israelites, in the same sense or to the same extent. As far as the moral law is concerned, it is of binding obligation upon Jew and Gentile alike, though it is not unfolded so clearly or fully as it is in the New Testament. As taught in the Jewish canon, it reaches only to a certain length. As far as it *does* reach it is a correct rule, though naturally incomplete. Apart from the moral parts of the Old Testament, the laws and practices recorded are not binding on Christians. When the Jews acted in conformity with the moral law, we may take them as examples; but no farther than that. The unchanging will of God is the rule of life and conduct under all dispensations. What the morality of the Old Testament says on our subject will be found most clearly stated in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, in the sixth commandment, viz.: "Thou shalt not kill." "The sins forbidden in the sixth

commandment," says the larger catechism of the Westminster divines, "are, all taking away the life of ourselves or of others, except in case of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defence." Had the last three clauses been omitted, this would have been a correct statement of the prohibition; but the addition, "except in case of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defence" clogs the explanation with doubtful elements. The passages quoted in proof of the exceptions are singularly inappropriate, being taken from parts of the Old Testament peculiar to the Jewish dispensation. We demur to their suitability, and maintain that the exceptional cases are not justified by them. The New Testament should have been cited in proof; or, at least, some part of the Old confessedly belonging to the code of eternal morality. Does the Old Testament, then, as far as it is a rule of life for all, furnish no exceptions to the absolute law, *thou shalt not kill*? We are not aware of such. Certainly the passages often quoted in justification of offensive war are entirely irrelevant. When the Psalmist exclaims in adoring praise, "Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight," he speaks as a Jewish warrior living under an imperfect dispensation. When others pray or express desires, "Scatter Thou the people that delight in war;" "who will bring me into the strong city?" they give utterance to the feelings of combatants eager for conquest. We deem it unlawful for an army or its general, to pray at the present time against another with which they may be at war, "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered: let them also that hate Him flee before Him," because exclusive Jewish patriotism is not the Christian's model; intense Jewish particularism being inconsistent with the universal love of God. Nor can the petition, "Arise, O Lord, in Thine anger, lift up Thyself because of the rage of mine enemies," be accepted as appropriate in a sinner's mouth, because it proceeded from a Jew praying in harmony with the times in which he lived. Such sentiments cannot be adopted by a Christian without transferring himself to a state of civilization happily passed. Whoever makes the petitions his own is a *Judaizer* that brings the peculiarities of one dispensation into another, or, rather, that corrupts the later by an admixture of the weak and beggarly elements of the former. When a Christian teacher attempts to justify war, let him not go, as he is wont to do, to the Jewish Scriptures; else he becomes a Jew for the time. Doubtless, they are most convenient for his purpose, because he finds enough there of violence and blood. But why go back to rude times and uncivilized peoples, when he has a better light to guide him in his determination of principles and conduct? Does he not betray the weakness of his cause by taking a lower standpoint? "If that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." Why forsake a faultless dispensation for an incomplete and temporary one? Surely the preacher errs in going to the *old* for texts favourable to bloodshed, without looking in the *new* for something to his purpose. He shews, indeed, his wisdom, but not the wisdom that comes from above. Away with all such wisdom in the treatment of God's Word. It is unlike the conduct of the apostle, who says with true nobility of spirit, "as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words as ye know . . . . God is witness, nor of men sought we glory."

To the Christian, the New Testament is his best guide, since it contains a code

of pure morality issuing *directly* from a Divine source. Whatever man owes to God and his fellow-creatures, religious homage and supreme love to the former, love and beneficence to the latter is plainly enjoined. Both for individuals and nations it is an authoritative code of morals. Here, then, we may naturally look for some precept bearing on war; and such will, probably, wear a comprehensive aspect; for it is a characteristic of the spiritual commands in it that they include various particulars under a *general head*. Classes or groups of duties are briefly comprehended in a universal proposition.

In coming to the New Testament we inquire in the first place, whether the command, *thou shalt not kill*, has received any limitation. None such appears, for the obligation is unchangeable. In that simple prohibition belonging to the moral code, no alteration could have been made. It remains in perpetual force.

The great argument furnished by the New Testament against war and its attendant evils, devastation, murder, cruelty, licentiousness, is that the general spirit of the book is directly opposed to such doings. Instead of violence being sanctioned, it is expressly forbidden. The Prince of Peace commands His disciples to be peaceable. As He was harmless so must they be. Following His example they should exercise patience, forbearance, and all the virtues worthy of a Christian. The principal passage containing the words of Jesus respecting revenge and war is in Matthew v. 38, &c. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also . . . . But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you: that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to shine on the evil and on the good; and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." As long as these words of Christ stand on the page of the sacred volume, so long will the unsophisticated reader of them conclude that they disallow the practice of war. Let us see what the Great Spiritual Lawgiver commands.

1.—*Love your enemies*. Surely war teaches men to hate and destroy them; or, at least, to kill their bodies, and by that means, send their souls, probably unprepared, into another world.

2.—*Resist not evil*. This is directly opposed to meeting violence with violence. The prohibition is absolute; and the reason is given in another place, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord."

3.—"*Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.*" Surely the most skilful and persevering attempts to kill others in as great numbers and as soon as possible, is not doing them good, even though they hate you.

In whatever light the passage is considered, it seems to give no countenance to the practice of war. This is confirmed by the conduct of Christ, who resisted not evil by violence, but was meek and humble, doing good to the unthankful and unholy, praying for His enemies, and endeavouring to lead them to repentance. Had the passage not formed a part of the Saviour's sermon on the mount, some might have thought it less authoritative. If John, for example, had taught such a lesson, it might have been said that his individuality appeared too prominently



in it. But the idea cannot be entertained in relation to the Saviour, whose teaching was complete. Yet we shall see, afterwards, that the words have been manipulated to convey a sense different from the natural one. The language of Christ Himself, with all its clearness, is perverted by the ingenuity of men who wish to accommodate Divine commands to their own likings.

Again, the Redeemer said that His Kingdom is not of this world, and therefore His servants do not fight. His Kingdom is spiritual, and the weapons of the combatants must be spiritual also, since the war is not with flesh and blood—with their fellow-men to destroy the flesh and shed the blood—but with subtle, spiritual, invisible foes, such as principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places. Were Christ's Kingdom worldly or secular, the weapons used by Christians must be of the same nature, outward *weapons of destruction*; but as that kingdom is holy, the character of the arms corresponds. Christ also reproved Peter for the use of the sword, saying, "put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

The apostle Paul admonishes Christians after this manner—"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, vengeance is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for, in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil; but overcome evil with good." In opposition to such exhortation, those who war undertake to avenge *themselves*, instead of giving place to the wrath. They usurp the prerogative of God, taking into their own hands what is here declared to be *His*. Not liking to wait for *His* retribution on the head of sinners, *they* undertake the punishment.

Again, James declares that wars and fightings among professing Christians come of their lusts that war in their members. If this be so, they must be wrong; for the lusts whence they proceed are active; whereas true believers have *crucified the flesh* with its affections and *lusts*.

Still farther, several of the old prophets speak of times when wars shall cease and implements of destruction be seen no more, connecting such consummation with a high degree of spirituality. Thus Micah foretells, "And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isaiah also speaks of a time when "the wolf and the lamb shall feed together; and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." These prophecies can only be fulfilled under the Christian dispensation of which they give a glowing picture, filling the minds of the holy seers with delightful anticipations. The prophets looked forward to a future when the holy mountain of the Lord—the spiritual Israel among whom He dwells—should not be molested with a brother hurting or destroying his brother. If, therefore, the seers longed for a happy period like this, it becomes Christians to pray for its arrival. As far as *they can*, they should hasten its advent. The Almighty works by means, employing His people as willing instruments in the fulfilment of His purposes. Hence they should labour for the realisation of the predictions in question. It is idle to speak of a millennium while they do not attempt to act in accordance with its spirit. It is nothing but anti-nomianism to remain contented with things as they are,

expecting the Almighty to fulfil His purposes in His own way and time ; and it is worse than anti-nomianism for men to engage in, or justify, wars *now*, while professing to believe in the speedy arrival of the millennium during which wars are to cease to the ends of the earth. If it be a desirable consummation that universal peace should cover the earth with dove-like wings, hushing the noise of peoples and the din of battles for ever, it is the bounden duty of Christians to abstain from wars *now*. What is right hereafter cannot be wrong at present.

We have thus glanced at the principal passages in the New Testament bearing upon the present subject, alluding, at the same time, to some prophetic and ideal foreshadowings. If their purport has been rightly apprehended, they are wholly inconsistent with the practice of war and its devastations. The Christian's path is plain when he takes them for his guide. Let us now refer to various objections which have been advanced against our views, as well as to some counter arguments from the New Testament itself, which are supposed to justify war under the Christian economy.

The precept "resist not evil," or, "withstand not the evil man who injures you," must refer, according to the preceding context, to our offering physical violence to physical violence. If this be so, the assertion of a modern Commentator is incorrect, viz., that neither our Lord Himself nor His apostles conformed to it in its literal interpretation ; for neither the expostulation of the former, when struck with the palm of the hand by one of the high priest's officers,—“ If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil ; but if well, why smitest thou me ? ” nor the expostulation of Paul, recorded in the Acts, “ sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten, contrary to the law ? ” is in point, because they relate to *moral* antagonism. Can the precept, then, be turned aside from its obvious sense ? One says, that it is not to be *pressed too strictly*, and proceeds to tell us that Jesus did not mean to teach non-resistance in certain cases. But how can we know what he intended to teach except by His words ? And the words are *not* pressed too strictly when taken just as an ordinary reader would understand them. The context gives no limitation or modification ; and, therefore, when a learned commentator refers to moral philosophy as dictating in what circumstances the precept should be obeyed, he is simply referring his readers to the light of a candle to read their duty by, when the light of the sun is shining. It is vain to talk about Christ legislating in *the freedom of the spirit*, not in the *bondage of the letter* ; and so inculcating *principles* which should regulate the inner purposes and consequent actions of His followers. He teaches principles by *examples*. Does the example suggest a general principle which *excludes* itself ? Does it not rather inculcate a general principle in harmony with, and inclusive of, itself ? Those expositors who have recourse in this instance to *the spirit*, as they term it, do violence to *the letter* that conveys the spirit. Like Origen, in his interpretation of Scripture, they subvert the literal, by a spiritual sense.

The language addressed by Christ to Peter, as recorded in Matthew xxvi. 52, has been strangely distorted :—“ Then said Jesus unto him, put up again thy sword into his place : for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” One writer says, that the expression “ he who takes the sword shall perish with the sword ” should be understood of “ private persons taking up the sword to destroy their lawful magistrates ; and this lesson it teacheth all Christians, Men must have the sword given orderly into their hands before they use it ; and *that* no private person can have against the supreme Magistrate.” All this is foreign to

the passage, which has nothing to do with private persons resisting by violence the supreme Magistrate. Another tells us, that the Lord does not say to Peter *cast away thy sword*, as if what he *did* say were not tantamount. The language is undoubtedly a caution to the apostles. The general expression "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" shews, however, that a principle is involved, and effectually refutes the restriction put upon it by an esteemed critic, viz., "only in Christ's willing self-sacrifice, and in that Kingdom which is to be evolved from His work of redemption, is the sword altogether out of place." Surely the proposition "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" is meant for all the Redeemer's disciples, who, having been called out of the world, belong to a spiritual Kingdom, the weapons of which are not carnal. And whatever is wrong in the conduct of Christ's disciples is wrong in others; for the dictates of morality are unchanging. If the worldly use worldly weapons consistently with their sinful thoughts, *that* does not make their conduct conformable to the Divine laws. They are still acting in opposition to the will of God. Those who engage in wars commonly perish, because they take the vengeance which belongs to God into their own hands; or oftener, indulge their own passions without a shadow of justification in doing so.

We shall now proceed to notice the *positive arguments* adduced in favour of the sword. And here we may allude to a circumstance connected with the last-mentioned passage, viz., that both Peter and another apostle had swords. Two of the Saviour's immediate followers were armed; perhaps out of an excessive zeal to defend Him, excited by the announcement of His coming sufferings. In the Gospel of Luke xxii. 35-38 we read, "And He said unto them, when I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, nothing. Then said He unto them, but now, he that hath a purse let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in Me. And He was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning Me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold here are two swords. And He said unto them, it is enough." Why does the Saviour Himself recommend the apostles to buy swords, if the use of them is absolutely forbidden Christian men? "Those," says Matthew Poole, "who interpret verses 35 and 36 as a precept of our Saviour's imposing a duty upon His disciples; or a counsel concerning the providing arms which they might use for the protection and defence of themselves, will not only find a difficulty to reconcile their notion of it to several other precepts, and the will of God declared by the apostles' practice, who never went about by force and arms to defend themselves in the first plantation and propagation of the Gospel, but also to reconcile it to the last words of our Saviour, who said, when the disciples told Him they had *two swords*, *it is enough*, which He would never have said if He had intended any such thing; for *two swords* were much too little to have conquered that multitude of adversaries which the disciples of Christ were to meet with." The phrase *It is enough* does not refer to the swords which the disciples presented, but only terminated the conversation abruptly because Christ perceived that the apostles were not in a state of mind to understand His meaning. His language had been metaphorical; and they did not apprehend it. Under a figure taken from military life, he refers to *moral measures alone* as the resources and means of self-protection which would be demanded in a service full of difficulty and danger. Henceforward the means of self-defence must be put in



requisition. These measures of protection were not the literal sword as they supposed, else why did they never use it in all the dangers they encountered afterwards, when actively engaged in spreading the Kingdom of their Lord. Had a *literal* sword been meant, it is evident that the conversation would not have been abruptly terminated by a mild rebuke on the part of Jesus,—*it is well, it was not to this my words referred*; neither would the disciples have refrained from the use of the sword in subsequent perils. The passage, rightly understood, is contrary to the employment of the sword by Christians imitating the apostles' example.

Again, it has been said that John the Baptist did not condemn the soldier's profession, for when soldiers came to him asking what they should do, he said, "do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, but be content with your wages." "He does not," says Poole, "blame the employment of a soldier, but only regulates their behaviour in that employment." And how does he *regulate* the profession? He commands soldiers not to do violence. "Consider, then," says Barclay, "what he dischargeth to soldiers, viz., not to use violence or deceit against any; which being removed, let any tell how soldiers can war? For are not craft, violence, and injustice three properties of war, and the natural consequences of battles?" Besides, even if John the Baptist *did* countenance war, he is not the Christian's master, nor did he belong to our dispensation. He that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. We profess to be Christ's disciples, not John's.

Still further, it is argued that we read of several *good centurions*, or captains of hundreds; and therefore their profession could not be unlawful. Men are often better than their profession, or the party they belong to. And then it is neither said nor intimated that when Cornelius was instructed in the Christian faith he did not abandon his profession. Were we to judge by the general practice of the early Christians we should conclude that he did not *remain* a centurion.

Many people still assert that war is undoubtedly lawful under the gospel. And we readily assent to the statement, provided the cause be just. What constitutes a just cause of war? Is it the ambition, caprice, revenge of one man or a small number of men? No; a just cause is one which has the sanction of God. Whenever *He* speaks, commanding one to make war on others, obedience to His behest is justified. But He does not speak in this manner under the gospel economy. He has spoken to us by His Son. And what was the heavenly announcement which ushered in His advent and indicated the nature of His mission? "Glory to God in the highest: peace on earth, and good-will towards men." What was the sum of His teaching? "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples if ye love one another." Love is the fulfilling of the law. The doctrine of apostles and evangelists was the same. Love one another; be at peace among yourselves. No command has been issued to the followers of Christ to do violence to their fellow-creatures in certain circumstances. Hence we conclude, that under the gospel, there is no *just* cause for war. If any say that the worldly and irreligious may fight since *they* are not forbidden, we reply, that the Divine will expressed in Revelation, is binding alike on all. "Let the wicked forsake his ways." The works of the flesh are forbidden; and among them are hatred, variance, wrath, strife, murder. They that do such things, testifies an apostle, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Nothing shews the weakness of the cause advocated by those who think that war is lawful under the gospel more clearly than the passages quoted to prove their position. Thus the Westminster divines



refer in defence of lawful war to Jeremiah xlviii. 10., and to the 20th chapter of Deuteronomy throughout. Such Jewish quotations are entirely beside the mark at the present day. They belong to a past dispensation.

But some one will say, perhaps, you are arguing about the conduct of *individuals*. All that you have advanced applies to *them*, not to *nations*. However plausibly you reason in relation to *persons*, your logic does not apply to *magistrates and rulers*.

We admit that certain duties, differing in some respects from individual ones, belong to nations. Magistrates and rulers, too, have special functions to discharge, differing from those peculiar to persons. Yet it must not be overlooked that nations are but aggregates of individuals; and if individuals, *as such*, are prohibited from doing certain things by the Divine law, it is equally true that a nation, composed of individuals, is forbidden to do the same. Morality does not change with the isolation or aggregation of persons. Nothing can make it right for a *nation* to do an act which an individual may not perform. If, for example, God has enjoined that a man should not attack, do violence to, and kill another man, He does not sanction one nation's attack upon another and slaughtering the inhabitants. In like manner, a king or ruler cannot do legitimately what is morally wrong in any of his subjects. In the Epistle to the Romans, the civil magistrate is termed the minister of God, that is, he is the instrument whom God employs. If such be the case, the civil government must do *only* what is in harmony with the Divine will. And where is the proof that magistrates and princes may make war in their official capacity, on behalf of those whom they govern? The minister of God, indeed, beareth not the sword in vain, and is a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil; but this language refers to the punishment of wicked subjects who transgress the laws of the society to which they belong. Whether *the sword* be emblematically extended so far as to include the punishment of *death* we need not now inquire. Our general principle is, that if it be wrong for one individual to murder another, it is equally wrong for a nation to invade and slaughter the people of another. We know that there is no *national conscience* properly speaking, and therefore some may think that national guilt is an ideal thing; but the thousands who compose a nation are *separately* responsible beings, and when acting together may contract national guilt which the Almighty Judge knows and punishes. A nation's sins are assuredly visited in this life. National calamities, pestilences, famines are the executors of Divine wrath. We hold, therefore, that the duties of nations are the same as those of persons. What the latter may not do, is equally forbidden the former.

It is owing to the spirit of Christianity that *aggressive* wars are commonly condemned by Christians at the present day. The higher the civilisation which a nation has reached, and the purer the form of Christianity professed in it, the more generally is it allowed that offensive war is contrary to the genius of the Gospel. Even in England, however, this is not universally conceded by Christians. We hope the day is not far distant when every one calling himself by the name of Christ will be ashamed to avow his belief in the duty or lawfulness of aggressive war on any occasion whatever. Public opinion progresses towards its universal condemnation; and in proportion as the Gospel pervades the hearts of men with its living power, constraining them to serve *God*, not *themselves*, will the sentiment condemnatory of such war prevail over the narrow passions of worldly men.

But a more difficult part of the subject remains, viz.—the propriety of *self-*

*defence.* What is the testimony of the Bible on this point in relation to individuals and states?

Self-defence, it is often said, is justified by the law of nature ; and religion does not destroy nature ; on the contrary it includes and preserves all natural right. We are ready to admit that defence is of natural right. The Redeemer Himself acted upon the principle. The apostles did so. Thus Paul asserted his rights when they were infringed. Christianity does not extinguish nature, nor reject the principle of self-defence. But the point of difficulty is, whether the law of nature, which prompts to self-defence when life is in danger, extends to *the taking away* of life, by warrant of the Gospel? Does the right of self-protection reach so far as to resist to the death when life is in danger ; or is it an unchristian application of the right to stretch it to that length? How far does it reach under the Gospel dispensation? Does religion restrain its exercise and regulate its action where life is concerned? The chief passage bearing upon the point is in Matthew v. 39, "But I say unto you that ye resist not evil." The Saviour Himself is the speaker, and many assert that He immediately explains His meaning. Had He intended to refer to a case of life and death, it is argued that He would most surely have mentioned it ; such being far more worthy of mention than those He did notice. But instead of doing this He confines Himself to smaller matters, saying that we had better take wrong in them rather than enter into strifes or lawsuits. It is contended besides, that a doctrine so unusual, so unlike all that the world had believed and the best men acted upon, deserved to be formally stated. We are not disposed to underrate the force of this reasoning, nor to think lightly of its importance. It appears to us, however, that the matter resolves itself into a general question of wide import, viz.—*the sacredness of human life.* If God has made man in His own image, giving him a soul which places him in nearness to Himself, did He intend that the destiny of such a being should be under the control of another human being to such an extent as to seal its fate for ever? Does the Deity reserve to Himself, as an inalienable right, the disposal of the lives of His accountable creatures ; or does He delegate that right in certain cases to man himself? On this question we are unwilling to speak positively, but are free to confess that reflection leads to the belief that the Almighty has reserved the right of taking away human life in His own hands. We do not think that it has been entrusted to others. The life of man is too sacred a deposit to be given to others. The Deity alone gives and takes it away at His pleasure. If this opinion be agreeable to reason and Scripture, it follows that self-defence cannot be justified to the extent of taking away life. Whether the passage already quoted from the Sermon on the Mount, respecting the non-resistance of evil, be a general direction, subject to limitation ; or whether it be of universal obligation is a matter of indifference when the inviolability of human life is asserted. The law of nature must consist with the law of God. If, as we suppose, the latter includes the principle of the absolute inviolability of human life, the former must harmonise with it. Should one ask, What indications does the Divine law contain of the principle we have just enunciated, we refer him to the command, *love your enemies.* Love to an enemy can hardly be reconciled with the murder of that enemy, especially when it is probable, in most cases, that by killing him who attacks another with murderous intent the murdered is sent into destruction. Some, however, will still urge the law of nature as strongly prompting self-defence where life is in danger, even to the taking away of life ; they will call the highest instincts of man the voice of God within—these instincts will

be pronounced *universal*, and therefore sanctioned by God. They are deeply seated. Who does not feel their unmistakeable force in certain circumstances? They are above reason, and act without it. When a father sees the murderer come into his house and about to butcher the objects of his dearest affection, does he stand coolly by and look on without making resistance? No. He rushes to the rescue, and cleaves the murderer in twain if he can. The implanted law of nature urges him to resistance, and he cannot but obey. What shall we say to this? Almost all feel and act in the manner described. Non-resistance is scarcely thought of in such a case. But still it is questionable whether the inward promptings under these circumstances be right *to the extent* of slaying the murderer. Human nature is corrupt; and it does not follow that because all would feel resistance *to the death*, that resistance *so far* is lawful in God's sight. The depravity of humanity gives rise to a doubt which should be encouraged in the circumstances supposed. Here human nature needs to be exalted, refined, and perfected. It is better to follow the intimations of Divine revelation than nature's promptings; and though religion was not intended to destroy nature, it was meant to purify it—to bring it nearer the perfect pattern of Christ Jesus. If we desire to obey the Lord, we shall follow His revealed will in preference to the supposed law of nature. Because a thing is very difficult of attainment, from man's imperfection, it is not therefore to be branded as unscriptural. *Grace triumphs over nature*. With these observations we leave the subject, confessing that we cannot see the way clear to the scripturalness of *defensive war*. Had nations professedly Christian not engaged in *offensive* wars themselves, they should seldom or never have been in circumstances calling for *defensive* war. Such as carefully refrain from attacking others, are not often wantonly attacked *by others*. And would not mutual arbitration settle all disputes that arise, not only between persons but nations? Why not resort to it in preference to arms?

We are sorry to see that our own country has not learned the folly and impiety of war. It boasts of its Bibles and its Christianity, of its missionary and philanthropic societies as evidences of the people's religious character. Proud comparisons are instituted between it and other nations. A celebrated author speaks of "*the English people alone, alone in the old world*, as now Christian. One might almost say that, just now, the British people stands among the nations as the surviving trustee of Christianity, or as the residuary legatee of its benefits." This is nothing but English brag, unbecoming a grave defender of Christianity, for were we all this we should not be so ready to encroach on the territories of others, or to stigmatise the peoples we attack as barbarians. A nation which seems to think so lightly of the inhuman practices followed in war, whose Christian men, and what is more, whose *Christian teachers* applaud and justify a war of aggression after it has fairly commenced; whose public prayers breathe of the war-spirit at what time cabinet ministers send forth fleets and armies against a so-called enemy, which invokes vengeance on those it dislikes and rejoices in the slaughter of fellow-creatures, which dreams of civilizing by the cannon, the sword, and the bayonet, heedless of the declaration, "they who take the sword shall perish with the sword," which indulges unholy passions against all countries supposed to insult its fancied dignity or pre-eminence; a nation, I say, which presents such phenomena cannot be deeply pervaded by the heaven-born spirit of love, the best evidence of genuine religion. Nor can the mother country hope for an extensive revival of religion, or a large diffusion of sacred truth either within itself or among dependent colonies while it makes aggressions which are opposed

to the principles of justice and the precepts of Christianity. Religion is ashamed of such things. They are a stumbling-block to others. The unbeliever observing them is strengthened in his unbelief, seeing that these professing Christians are as usurping as men of the world. Our genuine pulpits express the longings of earnest minds for the fulfilment of prophecy, for the universal reign of righteousness and peace, for the speedy advent of the time when wars shall cease to the ends of the earth, and commotions disturb no more the races of men upon it; for the time when the knowledge of the Lord comes to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Is it not mockery to utter such aspirations and encourage war all the while; to pray for a happy period of spiritual prosperity and approve what must inevitably retard its coming? As surely as glowing prophecies shall be fulfilled, so surely is it right for the Christian to pray for their *speedy* fulfilment; and if it be a duty so to pray, it must equally be a duty to do all that human instrumentality can effect towards this end; in other words, to hold forth and act out the great lesson of the gospel, "peace on earth, and good-will towards men."

LONDON.

SAMUEL DAVIDSON, D.D., LL.D.

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## ZOOLOGICAL PARABLES.

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"GATHER UP THE FRAGMENTS."—*John* vi. 12.

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No. V.

### The Breath of Life.

WITHOUT entering into speculations respecting the boundaries of vegetable and animal life, we may recognise the fact that all animals breathe, and that their breath always serves the same purpose, namely, the purification of the blood by means of oxygen.

It does not matter whether this effect be produced by bringing the blood directly in contact with the oxygen contained in the air, by means of lungs, as with the higher intellects; by air-tubes, as with insects; or, indirectly, by means of gills, as in the fishes and many other beings. The result is the same in all cases, although the means are apparently different.

See what is the object of the blood. It performs a double task. It carries to different portions of the body the particles which are required for their use, and it carries away the effete particles which have served their purpose and must be renewed. The blood must be purified of these dead and useless particles, and, like gold, it is purified by fire. Within every creature that draws the breath of life a fire is continually burning, and in that fire



the blood is purified. How that fire is lighted none of us can tell. We can put it out by altering the conditions of the body; we may neutralize it by letting out all the blood on which it acts; we may render the organs powerless by extreme heat or extreme cold; we may force it to burn itself out by cutting off the supply of fuel, or we may extinguish it by depriving it of the needful oxygen. But there our power ends: when it has once been put out no man can re-light it.

In the higher animals the lungs take the place of the grate. Taking ourselves as an example, we find the blood following a remarkable course. The heart is so divided that the blood cannot pass directly from one side to the other, but is forced to traverse the whole of the body, an arrangement of valves preventing it from going in the wrong direction. After passing into the system through the arteries, and depositing in its course the particles which are wanted, it returns by the veins, picking up and carrying off the used-up particles which have to be removed from it. The veins, in fact, act as a system of drainage. The blood, now clogged and blackened with effete matter, is pumped into, or rather against, the double organ which we know by the popular title of lungs, and which is composed of multitudinous air-cells and the tubes which connect them together. These cells are formed of a delicate membrane which permits gases to pass through it but excludes liquids. Surrounding the air-cells are the exceedingly minute terminations of the blood-vessels. They are called capillaries, from the Latin word *capilla*, a hair, and their walls, like those of the cells, are formed of a very delicate membrane. The air which is taken into the cells of the lungs is thus able to pass through the membranes into the blood, and the oxygen, which is the most important constituent of the air, permits the effete particles to be burned away. A temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit, or thereabouts, is quite sufficient for this purpose. On an average, the whole of the blood in the human body passes through the lungs once in each minute. The term, "animal heat" is clearly a misnomer. The heat of the body is as purely chemical as that of the kitchen fire, or of the lamp by which I am writing these lines. Were it not supplied

with fresh fuel the fire in the body would soon die out, just as would the fire in the grate, or the flame of the lamp. Fuel must, therefore, be continually supplied, and we call that fuel by the name of food.

In burning up the effete particles the oxygen itself undergoes a change. It is expelled from the lungs as carbonic-acid gas, an instantaneously deadly poison to all breathing creatures. Even when a comparatively small amount is mixed with the air, a partial suffocation and clouding of the senses takes place. In a church, or lecture-hall it often happens that the speaker becomes dull and the hearers drowsy. Neither the one or the other is to be blamed; the fault lies in the bad ventilation of the building which does not allow the carbonic acid to escape. If but a single breath of this deadly gas be taken into the lungs, the result is instant death.

Now we revert to the text from which we may seem to have strayed. - What becomes of this carbonic-acid gas? It is not wasted, as we might suppose. Though a deadly poison to animal life, it is as necessary for vegetable life as is the oxygen for animals. No sooner does the expelled gas pass over vegetables of any kind, than it is absorbed into their leaves and aids in their growth. It may have to travel great distances, but the vegetable is sure to have it sooner or later; so that the western wind may bear with it a human breath from America to nourish a green grass-blade or paint a rose-bud in England. Here is another point; with every breath which we expel we part with some of the material of our bodies, so that the words, "I die daily," are not merely symbolic but express a material fact. Again, the well-known passage, "All flesh is grass," is a literal truth and not merely a metaphorical phrase.

Suppose that we trace this human breath still further in its course. The plant absorbs it, passes it through its system, and then restores it to the air as oxygen, to be breathed by man. So, even with the breath, nothing is wasted, and the fragments of our breath are gathered up by the same watchful care which guards against waste of food or clothing.

J. G. WOOD, M.A., F.L.S.

## NATURAL HISTORY HOMILIES:

## Leviticus xi. 13-19.

In our daily speech we often compare men to animals. To illustrate some trait in his character we call a man by the name of some beast of the field, or bird of the air which has, or is supposed to have, the quality we desire to ascribe to him. He is as surly as a bear, or as fierce as a wolf, or stubborn as a mule, or as cunning as a fox, or as treacherous as a cat, or as revengeful as a wasp, or he is, perhaps, as timid as a hare.

The Bible contains several examples of this kind of symbolism. Ephraim is "a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke." David's enemies are strong "bulls of Bashan." When he would warn the disciples at Philippi against certain false teachers, Paul says:—"Beware of dogs." And our Lord himself, who knew so well what was in man, addressed certain Jews in these terms:—"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers."

Out of several fowls here pronounced unclean by the Levitical law I shall select a few, and will treat of them as *types of character*. I will not discuss the reasons adduced why these various animals were not allowed to be eaten by the Hebrews; but I would suggest, with many of the Commentators, that, perhaps, one reason why they were forbidden was that they had qualities which God wished His people to hold in abomination. He desired the chosen race to shun certain well-known characteristics of these birds. They were not to be Vulture-like, or Owl-like, or Bat-like. On this supposition I will treat of the subject, and may the Holy Spirit help us, so that, from this seemingly unpromising field, we may reap an abundance of wholesome and practical teaching.

## VI.—THE OWL.

"And these ye shall have in abomination among the fowls; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: . . . the *Owl*."—verses 13, 16.

The Owl is a melancholy bird. It flies about at night. Nobody likes to hear its dismal croaking in the woods. The children are afraid of it as they are afraid of ghosts and hobgoblins. No end of terrifying superstitions are connected with this bird; and many frightsome stories are told about it around the ingle on the long winter nights.

The Owl stands for ALL MOPING, MOROSE, MELANCHOLY PEOPLE. It is a type of those who have no sunshine in their

soul. Men are like this unclean bird when they live enveloped in darkness, see nothing but darkness, and speak of nothing but darkness. In their voice there is generally a remarkable resemblance to this midnight croaker. Without knowing it their song is wonderfully like the song of the Owl.

(1) *No Christian should belong to this genus.* I don't mind much when I see a worldly man gloomy and dull—it is the only way I should see him, poor fellow!—but when I see a Christian gloomy and dull, I get anxious, and I begin to think something must surely be the matter.

There is an inconsistency about such a thing. The very last man to pout and sulk should be the believer in Jesus.

(2) *The Bible everywhere represents religion as a thing of joy.* If you take either the Old or the New Testament view of the subject you will, in fact, regard religion as the most joyful thing in the world. The Bible speaks, certainly, of woe, and distress, and sadness; but not as for believers. These things are to be experienced only by the enemies of God. The children of the Heavenly Father are represented in the Bible as walking in the light, as singing for joy—as radiant, happy, triumphant. “The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads.” The New Testament, especially, is characterised by an exultant, cheerful tone. I could fancy a heathen—a Brahmin or a Buddhist, for instance, impressed with this characteristic of our religion on reading the New Testament. I could fancy him asking whatever the Christian gets to make him so happy. Happiness would seem to be

a leading feature in his character. Our Saviour says: “Your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man taketh from you.” And again, just before His departure, He said to His disciples: “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” Paul teaches the Philippians that gladness is even a duty. “Rejoice,” he says, “in the Lord always; and again, I say, rejoice.” Of certain believers of whom he is writing, Peter declares that they “rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.” In the Epistle to the Romans we read: “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

(3) *This joy is entirely independent of worldly conditions.* Whether the believer lives in a palace or in a hut, whether he is sick or well, whether he loses or gains, the joy of Christ shall abide in his heart, and his joy shall be full. We have known people very miserable who were yet surrounded with every earthly comfort and luxury; and we have known people, on the other hand, sick and sore, and



destitute almost of the common necessities of existence, who still, amid all these terrible privations, maintained, through grace, a perfectly satisfied and happy mind. They had very little of this world's good things, but they had a large and rich inheritance laid up for them in heaven. They took very short views of time, and very long views of eternity. The weight of glory to be theirs for ever, made them despise the light afflictions which they knew were but for a moment. Their trials had taught them to put perfect trust in God. They felt safe in "the everlasting arms." They had committed everything to the disposal of the divine love and the divine wisdom. There could be no disaster. God would keep them as the very apple of His eye. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord!" "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls: yet

I will rejoice in the Lord, and I will joy in the God of my salvation."

In 1 Peter i. we have a striking illustration of the power of religion to impart joy to men even in the hardest earthly conditions. The apostle is speaking of persons who have suffered greatly for their religion—strangers scattered abroad over the various countries of the Gentiles. They are poor, and starved, and naked; the world despises them; they are outcast from society; yet, living in the midst of these manifold trials, he says of them that they "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Let us imagine the case of one of these, a poor convert at Ephesus, or Corinth, or Philippi. He has been thrust out of employment. All his old friends are turned against him. His father and mother forbid him the house. Everywhere he is met with reproaches and taunts. Stones even are thrown at him. God only knows how soul and body have been kept together during these many months. His tattered coat gives him scanty protection from the

beating wind and drizzly rain. Emaciated and shivering he plods through the street. Does he envy the rich who fly past in their gorgeous chariots, or who inhabit the several mansions of luxury? Does he for a moment regret the sacrifice he has made of earthly comforts? Nay, he has a better portion; he would not exchange places with the richest and best off heathen in the city. The hope of that inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away makes his present trials of no account. He pities those who have it not, however grandly and sumptuously they may live. "O poor men!" he says, "Why must I be so happy and you have so little joy? I wish you would only learn the secret of true peace and gladness. They have perfect peace whose minds are stayed upon God."

That was a notable speech of Paul to Agrippa. He was a prisoner and in danger of his life. Everywhere he was despised and persecuted as the leader of a hated sect. Like his Master, he was poor and had little of the world's comforts. After-

wards he described his career to the Corinthians in these words: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." Yet he was not dejected or depressed. He rejoiced in his tribulations. He said to Agrippa, sitting in the midst of all his luxuries and splendours, with every comfort the world could give him: "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day,"—Festus and Bernice, and the great captains and officers of state by whom he was surrounded,—"were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." That was the greatest good fortune Paul could wish them to enjoy. If they were

just as happy as he was, if they were just as well off as the poor despised missionary at their bar, it would be well for them.

IN CONCLUSION: *Look on religion as a joyful thing.* If there are sad and gloomy Christians, depend upon it, it is no fault of Christianity. The faith of these people is defective,—their piety is at a low ebb. Moses endured, seeing Him who is invisible. The clearer our realisation of the Unseen, the lighter will be the effect upon us of the reverses of the present life. When the Christian gives way to immoderate grief and vexation at the calamities of life, he has shut out God's singing larks from his soul, and admitted the hooting owls of doubt and unbelief.

*Young man, if you admit Jesus it will be spring time in your soul.* When Christ comes into your heart, lo! the winter shall be past, the rain shall be over and gone, flowers shall

appear on the earth, and the time of the singing of birds shall have come. The Sun of Righteousness shall turn January, bleak and cold, into May, green and warm. The Christian, it has been said, can make out his own almanack. He can have the lovely season all the year,—the season of flowers and fruits, if only he will abide in the light of his Redeemer's countenance.

As when a wretch from thick polluted  
air,  
Darkness, and stench, and suffocating  
damps,  
And dungeon horrors, by kind fate  
discharged,  
Climbs some fair eminence, where  
ether pure  
Surrounds him, and Elysian prospects  
rise,  
His heart exults, his spirits cast their  
load,  
As if new-born he triumphs in the  
change:  
So joys the soul, when, from inglorious  
aims  
And sordid sweets, from feculence and  
froth  
Of his terrestrial set at large, she  
mounts  
To reason's region, her own element,  
Breathes hopes immortal, and affects  
the skies.

YOUNG.

A. F. FORREST.

BRISTOL.

## Correspondence Page.

[*Enquiries or Answers will be inserted here concerning Books, or about Texts suitable for Special Occasions, or as to Sermons on given Verses or Topics. Brief letters on any matter that pertains to the work of the Gospel Preacher or Student will also be welcomed.*]

### ANSWERS.

THE SPIRITUAL MEANING OF "INN," "TWOPENCE," &C., IN THE  
"GOOD SAMARITAN PARABLE."

In reply to Enquirer (Hawkesbury Upton) in preceding *Homilist* on this point, we may say that we do not believe that there is reason for pressing any meaning out of such details of a parable, in which they serve as the background of a picture. However, it may be noted that Trench does not think it far-fetched to regard the "*inn*" as the Church, the place of spiritual refection. He considers it fanciful to regard the "*twopence*" as either the two Sacraments or the two Testaments, thinking it better to say that they include all gifts and graces which the Lord has left with the Church; and he considers the promise, "When I come again I will repay thee," to mean that what is done to the least of His brethren, when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, He will account as done to Him. EDITOR.

### QUESTIONS.

SHAKESPEARE'S GREAT OMISSION.

Somewhere I have met with the statement that there is one great defect or omission in the works of Shakespeare:—"That none of his plays represent to us the free-will offering of a life on the altar of faith, home, or country." All students of the "Ancient Classics," (*e.g.* Aeschylus and Sophocles) will readily recall many splendid instances of such tragic subjects. Can any of your readers suggest any reason for this omission in our great poet's writings? Of course we cannot assign with *certainly* the exact reason. Where can I find this subject considered?

ANTHORPE RECTORY, LINCOLNSHIRE.

JAMES FOSTER, B.A.

HERZOG'S ENCYCLOPÆDIA.

Quelque Lecteur de *The Homilist* saurait-il s'il n'est pas question de publier une traduction anglaise de l'incomparable Herzog's Real Encyklopædie, dont la seconde édition est en cours de publication?

Il me semble que tous les amis des fortes études théologiques devraient se liquer dans ce but. Ou ne pourrait pas rendre de plus grand service à la théologie anglo-américaine.

OLLIERS-ARDECHE.

C. P.



## Reviews.

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THE EARLY DAYS OF CHRISTIANITY. By FREDERIC W. FARRAR, D.D., F.R.S., Canon of Westminster. London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin, & Co. Second Edition.

It is no disparagement to Canon Farrar's preceding works on the New Testament—namely, his two volumes on "The Life of Christ," and his two on "The Life and Work of St. Paul"—to rank these two volumes as the most valuable of the entire series. The complete set form, as they are intended, a noble companion, partly historic and partly expository, to the whole of the New Testament. And if these seem to us the best, when all the distinguished Canon has done is so good, it is not so much because of any intrinsic superiority to the other two works, but because they entered on ground where they had great rivals. The first has now to take its stand beside Dr. Cunningham Geikie's "*Magnum Opus*," "The Life and Words of Christ," and Lange's and Pressense's and Beecher's and Renan's and Ellicott's similar treatises; and the second beside Conybeare and Howson's classic on "The Life and Epistles of St. Paul," and Mr. Lewin's still finer contribution to the same subject. But here Canon Farrar has the field almost to himself. He says, "The present volumes are an attempt to set forth in their distinctive characteristics the work and the writings of St. Peter, St. James, St. Jude, and St. John, and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews." In following this design our author has at the outset, with his characteristic picturesqueness, brought vividly before his readers the moral condition of the world—which was indeed the Roman world—at the time when these apostles lived their sublime lives, and did their imperishable work. This part of his important task he has performed with matchless success. We seem to step into the midst of the degradation, the cruelties, the rampant crimes, the terrific degeneracy of the age in which, like gleams from heaven athwart darkness as of hell, the early Christians bore their witness for the Pure, Just, Gentle Christ of God. And amid such weird surroundings we find a fitting standpoint for the study of the apostolic life and literature and general mission. Especially do we then and there feel the force of the position of the writers who, like Canon Farrar, insist that "the Apocalypse is what it professes to be—an inspired outline of contemporary history and of the events to which the sixth decade of the first century gave immediate rise." But not only the Book of St. John's Revelation, the whole of the latter half of the New Testament is lit up with clearer and intensified light by the work now before us. For while Canon Farrar's enthusiasm, courage, eloquence are conspicuous in his every chapter, there is not a page that is not enriched with the resources of his varied learning and of his manly piety.

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THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS. By the Rev. C. C. TYTE, Professor of Biblical Criticism in Rotherham College, and Minister of the Broompark Congregational Church, Sheffield. London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co.

These six Sermons on I. Epistle to Timothy iii. 16, are based on the words of the Revised Version. The first frankly admits and fully meets the difficulty to some schools of Theology which the important alteration in the earlier words of the verse has occasioned. And throughout the little book there is the same honest and faithful spirit, and the same careful, not to say painstaking, expository method. The clear atmosphere of the teaching of this preacher, who is emphatically a teacher, is discovered in his words, "The Gospel, we must never forget, is not a system of philosophy, nor indeed of theology, but a record of facts." Paul's words to Timothy about the mystery of Godliness, which are the subject of the entire book, are a noble epitome of those facts which it is man's greatest glory to understand, to interpret, and, in some sense, to reproduce.



## *Leading Homily.*

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### LIFE TO THE DEAD.

"THEN SAID HE UNTO ME, PROPHECY UNTO THE WIND, PROPHECY, SON OF MAN, AND SAY TO THE WIND, THUS SAITH THE LORD GOD; COME FROM THE FOUR WINDS, O BREATH, AND BREATHE UPON THESE SLAIN, THAT THEY MAY LIVE. SO I PROPHESIED AS HE COMMANDED ME, AND THE BREATH CAME INTO THEM, AND THEY LIVED, AND STOOD UP UPON THEIR FEET, AN EXCEEDING GREAT ARMY."—*Ezekiel* xxxvii. 9, 10.

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**I**N the chapter which precedes the text the prophet has been instructed to unfold before the exiled nation of Israel a picture of renewed national strength and glory. A grand destiny is promised to them, but after the humiliation to which they have been subjected, in the captivity of Babylon, the prediction fell upon their disheartened ears somewhat as promises of great wealth might fall upon the mind of a pauper, or an assurance of renewed vigour on the aged and infirm, or the promises of great political eminence to some village rustic who has never dreamed of standing in legislative halls. They had no more heart to believe in that grand destiny than some of you have to believe that you shall ever stand in the beauty of a spotless holiness before the very presence of our Father. The first effort of the prophet must be to rouse the hope of the nation. Until that end is accomplished it is unlikely that they will rise and stir themselves to take hold of the Divine strength, and work

together with God in the establishment of their national dignity. How strange the contrast with former days. The time had been, in their past history, when predictions of disaster had fallen upon them in their self-security, as lightly as the warnings of age fall upon the ears of youth. Now, predictions of coming glory seem as hopeless as, previously, the warnings of coming woe appeared groundless. They are so shattered by all the tribulation and humiliation through which they have passed, that they cannot believe in the possibility of God raising them to their pristine power and dignity. All the prophet's visions seem visionary indeed to them—like dreams of night to die at dawn of day. All the hope he holds out seems illusive, and they are afraid to trust themselves to believe. They feel almost as hopelessly lost as if they were already dead, and their bones strewed on the plains of Babylon. It is to rouse them out of this despair that the vision unfolded in the text is brought before them. Carried in imagination into a valley where lie the bleaching bones, they see these scattered fragments framed and inspired with breath. They watched them trembling into life as they lay prone along the ground, until at last they spring upon their feet like an army ready for the conflict; and they are to draw the conclusion that if God can put life into bones so dead and dried, what can He not do with the nation of Israel?

Our text brings to our view forms without life, and then the inspiration of life.

I.—FORMS WITHOUT LIFE. The work had reached an advanced stage even before the prophecy of the breath. To this point I would call your attention for a moment. Separate bones had been fitted and articulated together, flesh was laid upon the skeleton, and skin covered it. There was the beginning of a Divine work. This was Divine, not human work. The prophet had spoken the message, but God had given the power. Yet these forms lay upon the plain with all the semblance of human bodies, and had no life in them. This stage of the vision represents a great deal of previous work by God. But these forms were powerless, for all the purposes of life, until quickened by the breath.

(1) *We learn that there may be a Divine work upon the natures of men, which shall, nevertheless, stop short of spiritual life.*

Let two men come before you. One is opposed to Divine truth, or, at least, is utterly indifferent to it. Science attracts him; politics stir him; art charms him; music fascinates him; commerce absorbs him. But the Bible is without beauty or power to him; it has no place in his thoughts, and exercises no influence in his life. Let another step forward. He has a perfect understanding of the Cross of Christ, and the work which was done there; he is able to explain to you very clearly how a soul may be justified before God through the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. The study of the subject is a recreation to him. He knows *how* to be justified with God, but has never sought justification. He knows that he must be born again, but has never prayed to be regenerated. In that man we see a beginning of the work of God. God has opened his mind to understand the great truths connected with the Gospel of Christ. He knows them all, and in those truths he has the vantage ground for spiritual action.

Take again the homage of men to Christian principles as unfolded in the Sermon on the Mount. "Never man spake like this man," say they. They place Him in front of the world's teachers. They feel that His principles will never die; that they will gain influence throughout the world. They would no more question the truth of this, than they would doubt the harmonies of Mendelssohn, or deny the beauty of some sylvan scene. God has affected their conscience as well as their understanding; yet this stage stops short of spiritual life. Like the fitting of that skeleton, and clothing it with flesh and skin, and providing it with all organs needful for life, yet leaving it lifeless. So God seems to deal with the consciences and understandings of men, and yet stops short of inspiring spiritual life.

(2) *These forms possess all the capabilities of life.* In this stage they lie upon the ground, but have all the capabilities of life—muscles strong enough to act, hearts to beat, and lungs to heave as soon as life shall come; ready as a ship waiting on the stocks is ready to float as soon as it shall touch the water; ready as the flowers are ready to take their colours when morning



dawns. There is all the capability, yet the absence of life. Does it not represent the condition of men with the capabilities and the powers of life? You have all the faculties for reverence, trust, and loving consecration; you understand how to use these powers in every direction of your life, save in that one upward direction that looks towards God. You have faith and love toward those around, and consecration to those who are dear; but to God, no trust, no love, no dedication. You are without spiritual life. The very development of these capabilities is an element of hope. Simply receive Christ, and God has given you all the capabilities that are necessary. Only your connection with Christ is wanted to attain spiritual life. You have watched the action of the galvanic battery, and you know that unless you have fastened the wire which connects the handle of the instrument with the battery you are conscious of no power. In the same way you can have no spiritual life until there is this connection with the life of the Lord Jesus. Seek that connection, and then through all the faculties and forces of your life there shall tremble the current of spiritual influences which shall enable you to live for Christ.

(3) *Yet, prior to the breath, these forms are powerless for all the purposes of life.* All the capabilities, unless imbued with life, are useless. No symmetry of form, no adjustment of joints, no tenacity of muscular fibre, no sensitiveness of nerves will avail for work or warfare unless life animates the body. So the prophet is commanded to prophesy to the breath, that the breath may come from the four winds and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. Applying to ourselves the lesson, no correctness of religious belief, no earnestness of thought and feeling on our part, will avail for Christian life and usefulness until that power of the Divine Spirit, of which I speak, has worked in the heart. You may pay homage to the beauty of truth and Christian principles; you may even speak reverently and tenderly of the loveliness of Christ—you can hardly help doing that; if you have any susceptibility, you can hardly withhold from Jesus the meed of praise—but these will not avail if there be no spiritual life. I do most earnestly press it upon you as being a most serious danger

into which you may fall. You remember those solemn words of the Lord Jesus when depicting the future of some who came before Him, saying, "Have we not prophesied, in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets." Then shall He say unto them, "I know you not, depart from me ye that work iniquity." It is sadly possible to be very near Christ, and even to work in His name, while you are not one of His. You may stand with all the appearance of life, as dead trees in winter, that are scarcely to be distinguished from the living trees. In the winter the dead and the living trees present the same appearance, the same branches and the twigs extended on every hand, but there is no life; and when spring comes with its warm breath, and summer with its fostering influences, they make no response, put on no beauty, and give no shade. It is possible in this winter of the Church's life to be indistinguishable from the living souls around us. It may be that you are living *like* "trees of righteousness planted by the Lord," yet without possessing spiritual life. Unless you connect yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ, there is no real spiritual life.

This is not only true of the individual Christian, but also of the Christian Church. No correctness of form and appearance will avail without spiritual life. Indeed, I sometimes feel inclined to question whether organization is so important as we think. You sometimes see a man with strong life and great vigour, even though there is some deformity of organization; and that man will be capable of doing a great deal of the work of life. You may see other men standing in perfectness of form and symmetry, yet with such frailty of life that they are unable to do the little work required of them. The organization of the Church is not of so much importance as the spiritual life which inspires it. I even question whether actual deformities may not be compensated by vigour of spiritual life. I would rather belong to a Church that has some blunder in its organization, but, at the same time, is endowed with the vigour of the Holy Ghost, than I would belong to some correct organization in which there is no spiritual life and strength.

II.—THE INSPIRATION OF LIFE. “So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.”

(1) *We learn from this that the working of the Holy Spirit is as essential to salvation as the work of Jesus.* It is essential to dispose the heart to accept Christ. That acceptance is the pivot on which a man's salvation turns: on one side, it is a soul unsaved; on the other, it is a saved soul. It is the very turning-point, the very border line, of the spiritual life; but it is the Holy Spirit which must dispose the heart to accept Jesus. You will not be conscious always of His working. You will only be conscious of certain feelings in your own heart. If you should feel an anxious desire to serve Christ, and to love Him, be sure it comes from the Spirit. Act upon it. Find your way to Christ. Bear in mind then that “the Gospel is not a mere set of facts; it is the channel of influences,” passing from the Holy Spirit to the hearts of men. Apart from these influences there will be no spiritual life.

(2) *The Holy Spirit does work in response to the prayer of God's servant, for we read that the prophet prophesied to the breath, and the breath came.* God put the prayer into his mouth, and the breath came. Pentecost itself was an answer to prayer. The disciples prayed day after day, in an upper room, until the Holy Spirit came. In the fourth chapter of Acts you read how the Church prayed for a fresh baptism of the Spirit, and again they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. You remember how Peter and John prayed for the Church in Samaria, and the Holy Ghost descended on them. Yes, it is a thought of hope to us that the Holy Spirit does work in answer to the prayers of God's people.

Now, what are the lessons to be learned from this:—

First: *That the Holy Spirit is the great hope of the Church to day.* It was not the sermon at Pentecost, but the descent of the Holy Spirit which caused thousands to be brought to Christ. It is not merely sermons to day, or any self-denying work in which His servants may be engaged, but the work of the Holy Spirit, which is needful to win souls. I believe the Holy Spirit is

competent for the work, and that He will bring about the millennial glory. I know, in saying this, that I shall differ widely from many of you. I know you hold very different views on this question from those I hold; but as I claim no dominion over your faith, I know that you will carefully examine whatever I can say. I will only ask you to study what I place before you by the light of God's Word. I say this is the Dispensation of the Spirit. Christ has sent Him forth to renew life and to complete the numbers of Christ's Church on earth. When that work is accomplished the millennial glory will break upon us. It is not by a second advent of Christ that these great results are to be accomplished, but by the work of the Holy Spirit. The Jewish Dispensation placed Jehovah first. The life of Jesus presented the second person of the Trinity in the very front rank. The Dispensation in which we are living places the Holy Ghost in front. He is now the great worker and will subdue all things to Christ. Of Christ we learn that He is ascended to the right hand of God, there to remain until His enemies be made His footstool. "This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool." He will not come again, I believe, until His enemies have been made His footstool. Then He will come to gather up the great results which the Holy Ghost is accomplishing, and present the great mediatorial kingdom to the Father. I do not think that we must wait for another descent in person, and a visible presence of the Lord Jesus, before prophecy can be fulfilled.

Be our views on this point what they may, and I know we differ widely, we shall not differ on this, that the Holy Spirit's work is essential to the accomplishment of Divine purposes; and I believe you will all join with me in praying earnestly that the Holy Spirit may fulfil the great redeeming work. If it was necessary three centuries ago that God should raise up Luther to press the great truth of justification by faith, it is needful to day that the work of the Holy Spirit should be presented in all its grandeur, and that the Church should be roused to plead for His mighty power. It is in answer to prayer that the Holy Spirit will work.

Second : *The Holy Spirit's work is as essential for personal*



*salvation as it is for the Church.* It is to those who have never felt the influence of His love that I would address a few words in closing. You accept the Word of God, and you have esteem for Christ, but you need the Holy Spirit to fuse your *creed* into *convictions*, and to evoke the homage of the heart, as much as of the head. Plead to-day for the Holy Spirit's work. You can ask for that, and you have the glorious promise that God is more ready to give it to you, when you ask, than you are to give bread to your hungry child. Think of that! Look at your child to-day, and go and pray that God will give that Spirit. Your prayer will be answered; your spiritual nature may be dead as those bones spread along the plains, but you will rise in strength and vigour; you will rise to dedicate yourself to God, to lay out all your faculties and powers for His service. May God grant it. Amen.

KENSINGTON, LONDON.

COLMER B. SYMES, B.A.

GULLS AND GUILLEMOT'S EGGS—SOCIAL PLUNDERERS AND THEIR VICTIMS.—“Man is not the only robber the poor bird has to fear. The gulls and ravens are *ever on the alert* to secure her eggs. This is horrid unkind of neighbours, but, perhaps, not inconsistent with our own practice. The gulls are for *ever scanning* the face of the cliffs, *hoping to catch* a glimpse of an *unprotected* egg. Directly a gull has found one he charges point blank at its small end *using his head* as a lance; the huge egg thus pierced sticks on his beak, and he flies away as though he was carrying a great pear in front of his head. In this way *he sucks out all the goodness* while on the wing, and *drops the shell* when empty.” So says ‘Rusticus’ of the sorrows of the victims of the sea-robber, a true parable of what is transpiring in English society to-day (we have italicised some of the points of analogy). Men ever preying upon the property of their less powerful neighbours, first coveting the small but much-prized possession of another, and then by cunning acquiring it and leaving to its former owner not so much as the shell. Are our pulpits faithful in dealing with this crying evil? Would it not be well, at least sometimes, to preach from such texts as “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house,” “Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark,” to be illustrated not only by the story of Naboth's vineyard, but by notorious instances of commercial wrong-doing occurring every day.

T. B. K.

# Homiletical Commentary.

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## HOMILETIC SKETCHES ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

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### The Great, the Greater, and the Greatest.

"Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens :

Praise Him in the heights.

Praise ye Him, all His angels : praise ye Him, all His hosts.

Praise ye Him, sun and moon : praise Him, all ye stars of light.

Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.

Let them praise the name of the Lord :

For He commanded, and they were created.

He hath also stablished them for ever and ever :

He hath made a decree which shall not pass.

Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps :

Fire, and hail ; snow, and vapours ; stormy wind fulfilling His word :

Mountains, and all hills ; fruitful trees, and all cedars :

Beasts, and all cattle ; creeping things, and flying fowl :

Kings of the earth, and all people ; princes, and all judges of the earth :

Both young men, and maidens ; old men, and children :

Let them praise the name of the Lord :

For His name alone is excellent ; His glory is above the earth and heaven.

He also exalteth the horn of His people, the praise of all His saints ;

Even of the children of Israel, a people near unto Him.

Praise ye the Lord."—*Psalms* cxlviii. 1-14.

HISTORY: "In this magnificent anthem, says a modern expositor, "which exhibits in a striking manner the majesty and the wide compass, as well as the nationality of the Hebrew worship, all creation, both in heaven and on earth, is summoned to

unite in the praise of the Creator.

The summons is a prophetic anticipation of Romans viii. 18."

No one knows either the date or author of this psalm.

ANNOTATIONS: Ver. 1.—"*Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise Him*

*in the heights.*" "O ye of the heavens.' The call to praise, instead of beginning from the earth and rising to heaven, begins with the higher sphere of creation and is afterwards extended to our lower world."

—*Canon Cook.*

Ver. 2.—"*Praise ye Him, all His angels: praise ye Him, all His hosts.*" "In the earlier Scriptures the word host is applied to the heavenly bodies (Gen. xi. 1; Deut. iv. 19, xviii. 3. See also 2 Kings xvii. 16, xxi. 3; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 3-5; Jer. xix. 13), but in later times it was used also of the angels (1 Kings xxii. 19). Here, as in Psalm ciii. 20, 21, the parallel clause seems to show that angels are meant. But angels and stars are joined together in Job xxxviii. 7."

Ver. 4.—"*Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.*" There are heavens within heavens, heavens above heavens. Those heavens that are high above all, the very outskirts of immensity, are to join, nay to start the chorus (Deut. x. 14; 1 Kings viii. 27).

Ver. 5, 6.—"*Let them praise the name of the Lord: for He commanded, and they were created. He hath also established them for ever and ever: He hath made a decree which shall not pass.*" By

His word He not only "*created*" all but "*established*" all, settled all by a law, from which not a particle can break away; placed molecules as well as massive worlds and systems in a sphere to which they are in inexorably bound.

Ver. 7.—"*Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps.*" Ye sea monsters (see Gen. i. 21). "These are mentioned first," says *Perowne*, "because they are at the bottom of the scale in creation."

Ver. 8.—"*Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling His word.*" "With what exact mathematical nicety did the wild storm, spoken of in Acts xxvii. 14, perform God's word."—*Kay.*

Ver. 11.—"*Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth.*" The devout genius of the poet having soared as it were to the highest heights, descended to the earth, scanned the dragons of the deep, the fire, the hail, the vapour, the mountains and the hills, the tribes of ocean, earth, and air, his eye and heart fasten on man, kinds and peoples, male and female, young and old, he calls upon all to blend their notes in the universal anthem.

Ver. 13, 14.—"*Let them praise the name of the Lord: for His*

*name alone is excellent; His glory is above the earth and heaven. He also exalteth the horn of His people, the praise of all His saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto Him.*" "Let them praise the name of the Lord, for His name, His only, is transcendent, His grandeur above earth and heaven, and He has exalted a horn for His people. Praise belongs to all His saints, to Israel's sons, the people that is near Him.' This order of the words occurs only here and in Gen. ii. 4. Here the inversion marks the termination of the second portion of the Psalm.

The concluding verse identifies the Lord of heaven and earth, whom all creation has been invited to praise, with the Redeemer of Israel."—*Kay*.

ARGUMENT: "All heavenly creatures are to praise from heaven the name of Jehovah (ver. 1-4), for God has created them and granted to them perpetual existence within firmly established limits (ver. 5, 6). And all earthly creatures are to do the same from earth (ver. 7-12), because Jehovah is exalted alone above everything in heaven and upon earth, and has exalted His peculiar people (ver. 13-14)."

HOMILETICS.—In order to use this psalm for purposes to quicken thought and inspire devotion, we may group the subjects under three general headings—The *great*, the *greater*, and the *greatest*.

I.—THE GREAT. Under this heading we have here the non-moral universe. This embraces the "*sun*," "*moon*," "*stars of light*," the "*heavens of heavens*," "*dragons*," "*fire and hail, snow and vapours*," "*stormy winds*," "*mountains*," "*hills*," "*trees*," "*cedars*," "*beasts and all cattle*," "*creeping things and flying fowl*." What a subject for study is this.

First: How boundless in variety! Organic and inorganic, plantal and animal, the countless tribes of sentient beings that tenant earth and sea.

Secondly: How immeasurable in extent! "*The heights*," the "*heavens of heavens*," the "*deeps*." What immeasurable fields of spaces do such words represent. To use language I have elsewhere employed, astronomers inform us that one hundred millions of stars may be seen through the telescope in our sky,



and that each one of them is the centre of a system, and has, therefore, a sky of its own incalculably deeper and broader than these vast heavens that encircle us. In this supposition there is involved a number of stars which no arithmetic can compute, and which baffles all imagination in the attempt to appreciate. But this it would seem, after all, is nothing compared with the immeasurable universe. Yet these stars, though they cover immensity thick as grass on earth's soil, or as sands on ocean's shore, are all known to God. "He telleth the number of the stars," &c. He knows the age, productions, size, velocity, influence, and tenants of each. Notice—

II.—THE GREATER. There is something greater here than this non-moral universe, with its vast masses of matter, organised and unorganised, non-vitalised and living, viz.—rational and responsible existences.

First: *Angelic* existences. "*Praise ye Him, all His angels: praise ye Him, all His hosts.*" The Bible is as full of angels as Homer is of gods, and it tells us that they excel in strength, are swift as lightning, holy as God, full of intelligence, all eyes, countless in multitudes, an "innumerable company," and vast in degrees of authority, "thrones, principalities, and powers," &c. There are—

Secondly: *Human* existences. "*Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: both young men, and maidens; old men and children . . . people near unto Him.*" Now this moral universe is greater than the non-moral. (1) It reflects more of God. It mirrors His spirituality, His freedom, His conscience, &c. There is more of God seen in one holy soul than in the whole stellar universe. This moral universe is greater because (2) The non-moral is but the symbol, the instrument, the tenement, the garment of the moral. Great as is the non-moral universe, what is it without moral mind? A theatre without a spectator, a school without a pupil, a temple without a worshipper, a house without a tenant. Notice—

III.—THE GREATEST. What is the greatest? "*The Lord.*" "*His name alone is excellent; His glory is above the earth and heaven.*" Greatest because—

First: He is the *Author* of all. "*He commanded, and they were created.*" "In the beginning God created the heavens and earth," &c. (Gen. i. 6, 7.) Greatest because—

Secondly: He is the *stability* of all. "*He hath stablished them for ever and ever.*" In Him all things consist, all rests on Him. Greatest because—

Thirdly: He is the *law* of all. "*He hath made a decree.*" We talk about the laws of God as if they were something apart from Him, but He, Himself, is the Law. The whole universe is His will in action. How great is God! "To whom then will ye liken God?" "He sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; He stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." "Lift up your eyes to heaven and behold who hath created these things."

CONCLUSION.—What subjects for thought are here! He who has endowed us with the sublime faculty of thinking has presented to us the grandest themes for meditation, themes designed and admirably suited to humble, quicken, develope, and ennoble our spiritual natures. Thoughts on such themes as these are pinions that bear the mind into higher realms of being, they can, as Milton says, "never be wearied out, they show the unreality of time."

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

LIFE AN EDUCATION.—"When we have once realised the idea that we are in a process of education, which God will carry on to its fulfilment, however long it may take, we feel that the loving purpose of our Father is ever resting on us, and that the events of life are not appointed as testing us whether we will choose God's will or our own, but real lessons to train us into making the right choice. If probation is our thought, then forgiveness or receiving a favourable sentence is our object. If I believe myself in a state of education, every event, even death itself, becomes a manifestation of God's eternal purpose. On the probation system Christ appears as the Deliverer from a condemnation; on the education system He appears as the Deliverer from sin itself."—*Erskine, of Linlathen.*

## HOMILETIC SKETCH ON THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

## The Unexampled Kindness of Christ to His Disciples.

"THEN THE SAME DAY AT EVENING, BEING THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, WHEN THE DOORS WERE SHUT WHERE THE DISCIPLES WERE ASSEMBLED FOR FEAR OF THE JEWS, CAME JESUS AND STOOD IN THE MIDST, AND SAITH UNTO THEM, PEACE BE UNTO YOU. AND WHEN HE HAD SO SAID, HE SHEWED UNTO THEM HIS HANDS AND HIS SIDE. THEN WERE THE DISCIPLES GLAD, WHEN THEY SAW THE LORD. THEN SAID JESUS TO THEM AGAIN, PEACE BE UNTO YOU: AS MY FATHER HATH SENT ME, EVEN SO SEND I YOU. AND WHEN HE HAD SAID THIS, HE BREATHED ON THEM, AND SAITH UNTO THEM, RECEIVE YE THE HOLY GHOST: WHOSE SOEVER SINS YE REMIT, THEY ARE REMITTED UNTO THEM; AND WHOSE SOEVER SINS YE RETAIN, THEY ARE RETAINED."—*John* xx. 19-23.

EXPOSITION: This account of our Lord's appearance to His disciples should be compared with *Mark* xvi. 14, *Luke* xxiv. 26-36. It is supposed by some that between the events recorded, immediately preceding, and what we have in this paragraph there occurred the bribing of the guard (*Matt.* xxviii. 11-15), and also the conversation on the way to Emmaus (*Luke* xxiv. 13-25; *Mark* xvi. 25).

Ver. 19.—"*Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week.*" All the evangelists agree that the resurrection occurred on the first day of the week. The event which John records here took place on the evening of the first day. On this evening the disciples had gathered together no doubt for study, conference, and devotion. "*When the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for*

*fear of the Jews.*" Their Shepherd was struck down and they were left now as wandering sheep, exposed to the ravenous wolves that surrounded them. Our Lord had told them the danger and persecution that awaited them (*chap.* xv. 18). "*Came Jesus and stood in the midst.*" Now whilst they were in this room, with the doors closed, Christ appeared. How did He gain admission? Not by force breaking in the doors. No! His resurrection body was independent of the laws of gravitation. "*And stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.*" The same salutation is recorded in *Luke* xxiv. 36. What words are these falling on their ears in heavenly music midst the darkness of the grave.

Ver. 20.—"*And when He had so said, He shewed unto them His hands and His side.*" *Luke*

says, "His hands and His feet." None of the other evangelists refer to the piercing of the side. "*Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.*" They were satisfied as to His corporeal identity, and enraptured in having once more in their midst the presence of their loving Lord.

Ver. 21.—"*Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*" Here He identifies Himself with them, in the same Divine mission. He is an Apostle of redemptive love, so are they. The Father sent Him, He sends them.

Ver. 22.—"*And when He had said this, He breathed on them.*" The word rendered '*breathed*' occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, but was familiar from its use in the Greek (lxx) of Gen. ii. 7. St. John uses to describe this act of the risen Lord the striking word which had been used to describe the act by which God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life. He writes as one who remembered how the influence of that moment, on their future lives, was a new spiritual creation by which they were called, as it were, out of death into life. It was the first step in that great moral change which passed over

the disciples after the crucifixion, and of which the day of Pentecost witnessed the accomplishment." "*And saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.*" "These words are not, on the one hand, understood as simply a promise of the future gift of the Holy Ghost, for they are a definite imperative, referring to the moment when they were spoken; nor are they, on the other hand, to be taken as the promised advent of the Paraclete (chap. xiv. 16), for the gift of the Holy Ghost was not yet because Jesus was not yet glorified. The meaning is that He then gave to them a sign which was itself to faithful hearts as the first-fruits of that which was to come. His act was sacramental, and with the outer and visible sign there was the inward and spiritual grace. The very word used was that used when He said to them, "Take, eat: this is My body" (Matt. xxvi. 26; Mark xiv. 22). It would come to them now with a fulness of sacred meaning. The Risen Body is present with them. The constant spiritual Presence, in the person of the Paraclete, is promised to them. They again hear the words, '*Receive ye,*' and the very command implies the power to obey."—*Bishop Ellicott's Commentary.*



Ver. 23.—“*Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*” Matt. xvi. 19, xviii. 28. (See my “Genius of the Gospel” on these passages.) “The medium by which they would remit sins is the Gospel committed unto them, for the efficient ministration of which they are now empowered by the Holy Ghost breathed upon them by their Divine Master. Through that Gospel they would remit the sins of all who accept it by faith. Our Lord in these words

declares the efficacy of the Gospel for this purpose. By the same Gospel the true minister condemns the rejecting sinner. The apostolic hand holds the instrument by which it is enabled to dispense release from the power and guilt of sin to all those who are penitent, and to retain under its condemnation those who are incorrigible. Thus with it in their hands apostles would go forth discharging the souls of men from sin, or confirming them under its condemnation.”

HOMILETICS.—The great subject which this fragment of evangelic history presents to us is *the unexampled kindness of Christ to His disciples*. Observe—

I.—HE GIVES THEM HIS PRESENCE AND GRANTS THEM HIS BENEDICTION.

First: He gives them His presence. “*Jesus came and stood in the midst.*” Though the doors of the room where they were assembled were shut, He entered and stood in the midst of them. No granite walls, no iron bolts or bars can exclude Him from His genuine disciples. He has pledged His presence to all such. “I will come to you,” &c. “I will not leave you comfortless,” &c. “Lo, I am with you always.”

Secondly: He grants them His benediction. “*Peace be unto you.*” This was just what they wanted. They must have been at this time in a wild tumult of anxious thought, memories, and apprehensions. All men want this peace, for they are like the troubled sea whose waters cannot rest; they are at war with their Maker and, consequently, with themselves, society, and the universe. Christ came to give peace. “Peace on earth” was the

burden of the anthem which the herald angels carolled over Bethlehem on the morning of His birth. Observe—

II.—HE DISPELLED THEIR FEARS AND ESTABLISHED THEIR FAITH.

First: He dispelled their fears. They were not only afraid of the Jews, but His appearance at first greatly alarmed them. Luke says “they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed they had seen a spirit.” This utterance of theirs implies their belief in the existence of disembodied spirits, in the possibility of these spirits appearing to them, and that these spirits were not friendly towards them.\* Men have always been afraid of spirits. To allay this dread of spirits Christ not only shows them “*His hands and His feet*,” but (according to Luke) says, “Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?” Here He implies (1) That spirit may exist apart from matter; (2) In that state spirit may appear to living men; (3) He demonstrates the materiality of His body—“*He showed them His hands*”; and (4) He urges on them an enquiry into the cause of their superstitious fear.

Secondly: He established their faith. “*Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.*” In Luke it is said that at first “they believed not for joy,” a state of mind which we can appreciate. At the first moment of good news the mind often says to itself, it is too good to be true. He established their faith not only by exposing His resurrection body to their view, but also (as we find from Luke) by eating with them. Observe—

III.—HE GIVES THEM A COMMISSION AND QUALIFIES THEM FOR ITS DISCHARGE.

First: He gives them a commission. “*As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.*” What the commission was we have in Luke xxiv. 46, 47. “Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”† They were to preach “repentance and remission of sins,” preach that to “all nations,” and to preach it in a certain order—“beginning at Jerusalem.”

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\* See *Homilist*, Vol. IV., Page 73; † Vol. V., Page 33.

Secondly: He qualifies them for its discharge. "*He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*" (1) He inspires them with the Divine spirit. Rightly to carry out a new enterprise a man must be put into possession of a new spirit equal to it, and to discharge this new enterprise of preaching the Gospel through the world, nothing less than the Divine Spirit was required. Christ now gives this, gives a new inspiration. (2) With this new inspiration they became invested with the highest authority. "*Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*" It is noteworthy that this authority was not given to Peter, or to any one of the disciples, but to all alike.\*

CONCLUSION.—How transcendent the privileges of the genuine disciples of Christ! He grants them His presence and imparts to them peace; He dispels their fears and establishes their faith; He gives them a commission and qualifies them for its discharge.

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

#### THE DAWN AND NOONTIDE OF REVELATION.

"Do not let any perplexities about the dawn of revelation hide from you its daylight sun. This earth itself was once a chaos of fiery elements, but it became the glorious and wondrous globe we dwell on, with its infinite harmonies and beauties in sky, and earth, and sea. Even man himself may once have risen from lower forms, and at any rate from savage life; but now intellect and conscience and love stamp him as divine, as made in the image of God; and we rank him as he is, not as he was in a by-gone age. In like manner judge of revelation by its end, not its beginning. To Christ it all pointed, and in Him it culminated, and from Him still flows a power that shall mould the world."—*Rev. J. M. Wilson.*

\* See my "*Genius of the Gospel*" on Matt. xvi. 18, 19.

SKETCHES ON II. CORINTHIANS,

BY DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

Man Talking about Himself and the Limitation of  
Apostolic Inspiration.

“I SAY AGAIN, LET NO MAN THINK ME A FOOL; IF OTHERWISE, YET AS A FOOL RECEIVE ME, THAT I MAY BOAST MYSELF A LITTLE. THAT WHICH I SPEAK, I SPEAK IT NOT AFTER THE LORD, BUT AS IT WERE FOOLISHLY, IN THIS CONFIDENCE OF BOASTING. SEEING THAT MANY GLORY AFTER THE FLESH, I WILL GLORY ALSO. FOR YE SUFFER FOOLS GLADLY, SEEING YE YOURSELVES ARE WISE.”—2 Cor. xi. 16-19.

OBSERVE here— I.—MAN TALKING ABOUT HIMSELF. Paul had said a good many things about himself. Here again he takes up the subject, and his language suggests, First: That the world is disposed to regard *such talk as foolish*. “Let no man think me a fool” (or foolish). In this he recognises the tendency of men to regard such self-reference and self-talk as weak and unwise. So in truth unsophisticated men do. When they hear a man talking about himself he impresses them with a sense of his folly. Inwardly they say, “What a fool that man is to be talking about himself.” It must be confessed that *generally* it is a very foolish thing, few things are more foolish. It is suggested here, Secondly: That such conduct *may become a duty*. Paul felt it such an urgent obligation at this time that he begs them to bear with him. “Yet as a fool receive me that I may boast myself a little.” He was on his defence, and he felt that such self-references as he made he owed to himself, to the Christians at Corinth, and to the cause of his Master. Hence he seems to say, “Though you regard me as a fool whilst I thus talk about myself, yet do hear me.” It is suggested here, Thirdly: That attention to such talk about himself the apostle *had a special claim*. “Seeing that many glory after the flesh I will glory also.” “For ye suffer fools gladly seeing ye yourselves are wise.” As if he had said, “the false apostles amongst you talk about themselves, they boast of their merits and achievements, and you listen to them. I have a special claim to your attention because of the proofs of my apostleship amongst you.” Observe here— II.—THE LIMITATION OF APOSTOLIC INSPIRATION. “That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting.” As if he had said, I do not talk of myself by “commandment”; I have no



special commission from Christ. How frequently does the apostle, in his communications to the Church at Corinth, guard against the impression that everything he wrote was Divinely inspired. Indeed in one case he indicates an imperfection of memory. "I baptised also the household of Stephanus: besides, I know not whether I baptised any other" (1 Cor. i. 14-16). "I know not." What, an inspired apostle not knowing what he had done, forgetting the religious ordinances he had celebrated! In his letter to Timothy he himself says, "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching," implying that all Scripture is not inspired. It is for us to find out which the inspired ones are, to separate the human from the Divine. Whatever agrees with the character and the teaching of the spirit of Christ we may rest assured is inspired of God. Who but God Himself can tell the enormous amount of injury that has been done to sacred truth by the dogma of verbal inspiration, regarding all the imprecations of David, all the reasonings of Job's three friends, and even the utterances of Satan himself as inspired by heaven? The Scriptures *contain* the word of God, but they are not the word of God: the casket is not the jewel, the shell is not the kernel. This by a devout and earnest study we must find out for ourselves. CONCLUSION.—The subject teaches, First: That we must not *shrink from the discharge of a duty however painful*. Paul, as a humble and modest man, felt it a very painful thing to talk about himself. His native modesty shrank from it, yet though he would be considered a "fool" he did it. Learn, Secondly: That we must *study the Scriptures with a discriminating judgment*. We must penetrate through the "letter" that is human, and reach the "spirit" that is Divine. "Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law."

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THE WITNESS OF THE BELIEVERS.—"The Spirit in the prophets was His first witness, and His Spirit by miracles was His second, and the Spirit by renovation, sanctification, illumination, and consolidation, assimilating the soul to Christ and Heaven, is the *continued witness* to all believers."—*Baxter*.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

“Good Gifts from Above.”

James i. 16-18.—“DO NOT ERR, MY BELOVED BRETHREN. EVERY GOOD GIFT AND EVERY PERFECT GIFT IS FROM ABOVE, AND COMETH DOWN FROM THE FATHER OF LIGHTS, WITH WHOM IS NO VARIABLENESS, NEITHER SHADOW OF TURNING. OF HIS OWN WILL BEGAT HE US WITH THE WORD OF TRUTH, THAT WE SHOULD BE A KIND OF FIRSTFRUITS OF HIS CREATURES.”

It is very easy to err in things spiritual and it is very dangerous, but we do not believe it to be dangerous, and so make it the easier still. What we really believe to be dangerous, what we are thoroughly convinced will entail ruin and disaster, we carefully avoid, we keep away from as far as we possibly can. If we believed that error in religious belief, erroneous views of God or of ourselves were pernicious, should we not be as careful to keep as far away from these? The common highway, dusty and stony though it be, is the only safe way; it is only **Safety on the Highway.** by keeping to it we shall arrive at the city which hath foundations. But if we are not deeply convinced of this, if we do not thoughtfully believe it, we shall very likely cross over into Bye Path Meadow, where, as far as we can see, the soft, green, easily-footed path runs parallel with the Highway itself. “It does not matter what a man believes so long as his life is in the right, or so long as he is sincere, or so long as he is honest and honourable. What does it matter what a man’s views are about the being of God, or the origin of man, or the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, so long as he holds what he does hold sincerely? He cannot be wrong whose life is in the right!” Have not we been hearing a good deal of that kind of thing of late? Have not most of us been doing something more than hearing about it, *not* to our advantage?

And yet is there anything more unphilosophical, more opposed to common sense, more contradictory of everything else that in

every other sphere but the spiritual we are most careful to do?

Does it not  
matter what  
we believe?

We do not say about our physical well-being, it does not matter what kind of air we breathe, or what kind of food we eat so long as the body thrives; or of the upbringing of the children, that it does not matter what opinions they have of their parents so long as they are dutiful and obedient; or of the social and political views men may entertain so long as the life of the community is pure and noble, and the life of the nation sound and vigorous and true. Yes, fresh air and nourishing food for the body, filial affection for the child, profound moral convictions for society, the righteousness which exalteth a nation for the state; but when it comes to the growth, the progress, the well-being of the immortal soul, the air it breathes and the food it lives by, the affections by which alone it can lay hold of the heavenly Father's heart, the moral and spiritual convictions in which it has its being, the righteousness it must possess if it is to stand accepted in God's sight,—when it comes to these it does not much matter what the opinions are. The laws which rule so rigorously elsewhere have little or no dominion here. "He cannot be wrong whose life is in the right!" Elsewhere if you touch pitch you will be defiled. Yes, and if you touch pitch here you will be defiled more deeply still. Pitch, with which you merely defile your hands, may be washed off, but when "evil communications have corrupted your good morals," what will cleanse you? "Whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap." "Be not deceived, God is not mocked," neither is His law. As a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he," and so is his life; so shall his life be. Be not deceived where deception would be fatal; do not err, where to err is to go further and further from God, till your feet stumble upon the dark mountains. "Do not err, my beloved brethren."

Of all errors in religious opinion those are the most fatal which lead the soul away from right views of God; which lead to light thoughts of God's judgment of, or upon sin; which lead to imputing sin to God, as if He could have a hand in tempting to sin, in creating opportunities or facilities for sin. Error here is fatal; for to think thus of

The most  
fatal of all  
errors.

God is to think lightly of sin, and to think lightly of sin is to feel little regret for sin, and to feel little regret for sin is to feel little need of salvation, and to feel little need of salvation is to lightly esteem the Rock of salvation; it is carelessly to pass by, or carelessly to trample upon, the blood of the everlasting covenant. Let no man say he is tempted of God; this were dangerous and deadly error.

But there is another error, dangerous in its tendency, very hurtful in its effects upon the spiritual life, the cause of much of the lack of spiritual power and spiritual joy,—it is that of forgetting that while no evil *can* come from, all good *does* come from God; that while every hurtful element in our lives comes from some other than God, every helpful thing comes from no other than God. “Do not err” here, “my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.”

The thought here is that so far from its being possible for God even to suggest an evil thing to man, it is He Himself who initiates all good in man; that He is the Originator of all spiritual life as it is from Him there comes everything that nourishes this life; that it is He, the Father of all that is light, in whom is no darkness at all, from whom life and light and truth proceed. All good, every good comes from God.

It is a soul-strengthening, gratitude-evoking thought we have here: let us follow the apostle in his illustration of it: and first, generally. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.”

I.—(1) “*From above*” is a common scriptural expression for Heaven, or for Him who dwells there. “Except a man be born *from above*.” “I am *from above*.” “Thou couldest have no power at all against me except it were given thee *from above*.” “This wisdom descendeth not *from above*.” Man naturally thinks of the heavens, the expanse overhead as the dwelling-place of the Most High; it is with instinctive expectation he looks upwards for Him Who dwelleth in light



and with Whom the light is: he was made erect that he might hold converse with Him Who is *above*, and Who sends His hand *from above* to deliver His people when they are in the great waters.

(2) "*Every good gift and every perfect gift* is from above." The "good gift" is *good giving*: the manner in which the gift is bestowed; the perfect gift is the gift itself in all its completeness and in all its adaptation to the blessedness it is intended to convey. There are two things needed to the perfection of a gift: the thing itself and the spirit in which it is given: the preciousness of the gift itself, and the preciousness of the manner in which it is conferred; and both of these are seen to perfection in God's gifts. There is the *good giving*, the loving spirit which delights to give, with no grudging hand and with no upbraiding heart; and there is the "perfect gift," in itself good, divinely adapted to satisfy the soul,—both from above.

(3) All this is too general, too vague, too remote for the apostle. He wants to tell not only *from whence*, but more specially *from Whom*. "From above" does not satisfy him, he thinks of *Him who is above*, and while he thinks there comes upon him, as by a flash of the light by which he sees it, the great conception of God, the Father of all that is light, the Father of all that has affinity for the light, the Father of all that hates the darkness of error, ignorance, sin! All that is of the nature of light comes from God. God is light and He is the Father of lights. It is not enough to say that He is the Creator of light, of the lights in the heavens, to which in all ages men have lifted their eyes as to the dwelling-place of God. This is true: He set the sun in the heavens, He causes the moon to walk in her brightness. "Lift up your eyes on high and behold who hath created all these things!" This is true, but there is more than this: He is the FATHER of lights. It is not that the mind of the apostle is through the whole of this passage dominated as it were by the idea of Fatherhood. The birth, generation, growth of good suggested by the birth, generation, growth of evil. There is this, but more; God is the Father of lights, in that from Him all

light proceeds, the light of thought, the light of conscience, the light of purity, the light of love, the light of joy, the light of His countenance which He uplifts upon those who truly seek His face. It is from Him as from its Fatherly source, that we have mental insight, the opened eye to see the light of truth; moral discernment, the purged eye to distinguish in the light which He has shed around us the way He would have us to go; the spiritual purity which is at peace with itself and which calmly mirrors the face of Him of whom we are told that the pure in heart shall see Him! He is the Father of LIGHTS.

All this seems remote speculation, it is a fearfully practical truth for our daily lives. We like to hear about Him as the Father of *mercies*, mercies that are so like Him that we cannot say Creator, must say *Father of mercies*. Do we as cordially, as acquiescingly like to hear of the Father of *all that is light*; **Light as well as Love.** the light that searches out and hates the darkness, as well as enlightens our lives and illuminates our path? If we would see God aright, if in His light we would see light, we must see Him, love and revere Him as the Father of mercies and the Father of lights.

(4) But the apostle has something further to tell us. Those lights which shine in the firmament do not always shine. They rise and set, they go out, they disappear, they are hidden in dark eclipse. But the Father of lights! With Him is no variableness,

**God never ceases to give.** neither shadow caused by turning. He is the unchangeably good and perfect Giver. His light shines and it ever shines. He is essential light and in

Him is no darkness at all. Other givers are variable, they change, they sink beneath our horizon out of our sight; but this Giver from above, He giveth and He ever giveth, and all His gifts are perfect gifts, and are but meant to prepare the recipients for more. Do not err, my beloved brethren, no possible evil can come from Him from whom all good proceeds.

II.—Hitherto the apostle has been speaking somewhat generally of good and perfect gifts, he will now select and tell of the one great gift and the one great good, the gift of life, the

regeneration of the spirit, the new birth. "*Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.*" It is still the same uppermost thought that He does all good things willingly, voluntarily, "*of His own will.*" He does not do these good things because He is importuned, not after the fashion of the unjust judge. On the other hand, He wills to do them, He gives because it is His will to give, and of His own will begat He us.

(1) "OF HIS OWN WILL." We may give this a cold, stern setting, or we may give it a warm, kindly setting. We may speak of the gift of eternal life as having its source and origin in the mere, sheer sovereign will of Him who doeth as He wills in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; or we may speak of it as originating in the free, spontaneous, loving will of Him who wills all loving and kindly deeds, from whom comes "every good and perfect gift," the Father of mercies and "the Father of lights." Perhaps you might repel some timid soul by setting it in the one way; you can scarcely fail to touch the most timid heart to hope, in the other. How can we tell the truth, of which this passage is so full, if we tear it away, lacerated and bleeding, from its living organic connection with the apostle's present purpose in speaking about it? The readers of his epistle knew that it was the will of God which willed their salvation; that men must be born from above, if they were ever to enter the kingdom of heaven; that the sons of God were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. They knew that; we know that. But observe how all this is here brought in, and for what end; it is to convince us that it is impossible for anything but good to come from God, and that when He begat us with the word of truth it was but the outcome of the loving will that wills every good. "OF HIS OWN WILL BEGAT HE US." Yes, absolute, blessed truth. But you will see it better, and be drawn to it more closely, if you look at it through the softened atmosphere of Scripture; the atmosphere through which there shines the face of the Father of mercies and of all that is light,

The best  
giving and  
the best gift.

Remote or  
near?

Whose uncaused, unsolicited, unimportuned love begat us with "the word of truth."

(2) It is the invariable testimony of Scripture that men are regenerated by the instrumentality of the word of truth, the Gospel of our salvation. "Words whereby thou shalt be saved."

**The instrument of the Spirit.** "The words of this life." "Precious promises, that by these we might become partakers of the Divine nature." "Being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God." "He begat us by the word of truth." If we have been born again it has been by the word of God as made known to us in His Scriptures and through His Son. *Not* by some providential arresting of us in our thoughtlessness, *not* by some sore bereavement which has emptied the world to us and made it lonely, but by the believing reception of the "word of truth." Those other things may, indeed, drive or lead a man to seek after the truth, they may be hard disciplines, schoolmasters to Christ, but to Him we must be brought, and His words we must receive, if we are to be begotten to the hope of eternal life. The Scriptures are useful for many ends; before all, it is the instrument in God's hands of our salvation. The first use the Bible is to be put to is a saving use; and the more intelligently we read it, the more cordially we believe the "word of truth" contained in it, the more lively will be our hope that we are the children of God.

(3) One other thought the apostle would present, and this also in harmony with his pervading purpose,—"that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures"; that the believing readers of his epistle might have the high honour of being presented to God as first-fruits. Who would grudge the early

**The early martyrs the first-fruits.** believers, the early martyrs, slain for the testimony of Jesus Christ, their place as "a kind of first-fruits"; and who is not glad to be assured that when they were suffering here upon earth, passing through much tribulation for "the name's sake," apostles were commissioned to strengthen them with the assurance that He, even He in whom they trusted, had them full in sight, and was even then anticipating the time



when He should see in them the pledge and the earnest of the great harvest of the great day of the Lord?

The words of the apostle glow and burn; they shine in the light of Him who is the Father of all that is light; they are full to overflowing of the mercies of the God of all comfort. What

What have *we* which we have not received, and what of ourselves? should have become of us but for *His* gifts! What would be our condition to-day but for that free, uncaused, "willing" love of God, which thought upon us, and sent forth His word and healed us! And what should be our gratitude for the lively hope, the promise that is yea and amen,—fruits of His love, fruits unto His glory!

"Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift cometh from above."—Amen.

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

"Mosses—meek creatures! the first mercy of the earth, veiling with hushed softness its dintless rocks; creatures full of pity, covering with strange and tender honour the scarred disgrace of ruin, laying quiet finger on the trembling stones to teach them rest. No words that I know of will say what these mosses are. . . . They will not be gathered like the flowers for chaplet, or love token; but of these the wild bird will make its nest, and the wearied child his pillow. And as the earth's first mercy so they are its last gift to us: when all other service is vain from plant and tree, the soft mosses and gray lichen take up their watch by the head-stone. The woods, the blossoms, the gift-bearing grasses have done their parts for a time; but these do service for ever. Trees for the builder's yard, flowers for the bride's chamber, flowers for the granary, moss for the grave."—*Ruskin*.

## Germes of Thought.

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### Three Aspects of Life.

*(An Easter Meditation.)*

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"NOW IN THE PLACE WHERE HE WAS CRUCIFIED THERE WAS A GARDEN; AND IN THE GARDEN A NEW SEPULCHRE, WHEREIN WAS NEVER MAN YET LAID."—*John* xix. 41.

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OF the four evangelists John alone gives us anything more than a bald description of the place where Christ was crucified. Minuteness in the description of the closing scenes and incidents of men's lives is a thing which all more or less desiderate. Those whose friends have died abroad always evince anxiety to know how their death happened, what they said or how they felt before the end came, and anyone who can gratify their wishes in this respect is eagerly welcomed. So, likewise, are they desirous of possessing some knowledge of the place where they lie buried, and a photograph of the tomb and its surroundings does something at least to allay the feelings of regret with which they remember that they died among strangers and are buried in a strange land.

Such a service John has rendered to us in the short though beautiful description of our text, which may be looked upon as a sort of mental photograph of the place where Christ was crucified, and where also He was buried. The thought of crucifixion seems relieved of some of its harshness when we associate it with a garden, and the gloom of the grave is relieved by its lovely surroundings.

Our text, then, seems very naturally to remind us of the varied experiences through which we pass in life, and to show us how changeable its aspects are, how often its scenes are shifted.

I.—LIFE'S EARLIEST EXPERIENCES ARE SUGGESTED TO US IN THE THOUGHT OF A GARDEN. "Youth is," says Augustine, "the flower of our days," Cicero speaks of it as "the blessed time," while the Elizabethan writers have the expression, "the primrose of our youth." Youth is, indeed, a paradise. Like Adam and

Eve we all commence life in a garden. Its earlier years form a pleasure-ground in which we indulge in playful gambols, full of spirits and full of energy. Youth is life's morning, and morning is ever associated with freshness and joy. How pleasant it is to enter a garden in a summer's morning; to breathe the fresh air and inhale the sweet odours which the opening flowers, heavy with the early dew, send forth in all directions; to wander along leisurely, listening to the warblings of the birds; to find ourselves drawn from our cares and troubles to happier thoughts, and possessed by an unwonted feeling of freedom and light-heartedness. What we thus enjoy, alas, but temporarily, is the continuous experience of those in childhood and early youth, for then life is a garden, and those who are placed in it run hither and thither, in the enjoyment of their innocent pleasures, and cull the flowers and fruits which grow therein. It is in life's morning that the stream of pure delights flows most abundantly, as the fountain of Ammon overflowed only at dawn, and youth drinks of it to the full.

We associate all that is bright and joyous with a garden, and that is surely characteristic of youth. Health is at its best. Aches and pains are the exception and not the rule. The energies are fresh and buoyant; the powers active and restless. Hope is ever radiant; imagination is ever at work, and the colours which it paints are never dark. Care is unknown; what of it there is disappears like breath on a mirror, even while you look at it.

Youth is, indeed, a garden, wherein there are many buds of hope and flowers of promise, and where everything speaks of life and joy. It is the prerogative of youth to enjoy the pleasures which are provided, and which it finds in itself, if nowhere else, proving how true it is that if we have happiness within, all things outside of us will wear a cheerful aspect. And it is right and in accordance with the Divine intention that youth should be a time of unalloyed happiness. Dulness or gloom is foreign to youth. Where it exists it seems unnatural and betokens something wrong. Why should men seek, as they sometimes do, to hinder the young from their youthful enjoyments? God intends them,

wishes them, to be happy, otherwise He would not have made the early years of life as a garden.

“Gather your rosebuds while you may,  
Old time is still a flying;  
And flowers which bloom so fair to-day  
To-morrow will be dying.”

Who did not find the days of their youth as a garden, in which they disported themselves to their hearts' content, and plucked the flowers and fruit which it afforded? Who did not then cherish many bright flowers of promise, and paint many gay pictures of future blessedness? No matter whether these flowers have faded, and these pictures were mere figments of imagination, do we not think of the early part of life as having been spent in a garden? Do we not now look back upon them as our happiest days and wish, though in vain, that they might return? Youth comes but once; it recurs to none, and wisely so, for our Heavenly Father has happiness richer far in store for those who do His will, than could be ours even were we once more placed in the garden of youth.

But, no, it cannot be; the cherubim and the flaming sword forbid. Life all through might have been a garden, but we have been driven, or rather have driven ourselves forth. Like our first parents we have eaten of the forbidden fruit and are condemned to toil and labour, where formerly we had but to gather. The fertility of the garden is exchanged for the barrenness of a desert, but we are not without hope that the day will come when the “desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.”

II.—LIFE'S LATER EXPERIENCES ARE THOSE OF THE CROSS. The aspect of life soon changes. No longer is it a play-ground, but a scene of warfare. Unmingled happiness is exchanged for bitter sorrow and disappointment. The clouds which youthful imagination had clothed in golden splendour prove to be dull and leaden; the brightness fades, the blossoms wither, the trees are stripped of their leaves, and we observe, what had amid the luxuriant foliage escaped our notice, the form of a cross standing in clear but ghastly outlines against the bright blue sky.

The sight inspires men with terror, often fills their hearts with despair. Their flowers of promise wither ere they reach maturity;



the buds of hope drop off and die. They are gradually delivered from the spell of their early dreams as they discover by stern experience what the world really is.

Thus men pass from the garden to the cross; from playful gambols to laborious work; from the freshness and vigour of the morning to the heat and weariness of noon; from the joy which springs from wishes that needed but to be expressed to be realized, to the mortification that arises from failure and defeat, after repeated and industrious efforts; from the rest of satisfied desire to the constant uneasiness created by ever recurring disappointments.

The experiences of maturer life are often poignant in the extreme. Our hearts are constantly on the rack, ever undergoing crucifixion. Scarcely can we move a step in our journey without encountering thorns and leaving tracks of blood behind us, and even when we stretch forth our hands to pluck a rose by the wayside we utter a sharp cry of pain as the thorn which lay concealed pierces us to the quick.

The shadow of the cross ever rests upon us. We are ever burdened by its weight, for we have to carry the cross on which we are crucified, which makes our trial doubly severe. There are seasons of comparative freedom from the severer forms of trial, but never absolute relief to him who has taken up his cross and follows Christ.

Why is it, we ask, that the experiences of life are so painful? Why do we pass through life ever borne down by the weight of a cross? Because of sin! It was sin that necessitated the coming of our Lord into the world; that nailed Him to Calvary's cross where He gave His life for men. It is sin which still crucifies Him afresh, and which has weighted us with a cross, and causes the sharp pangs of our crucifixion. But for the presence of sin in the world, and in men's hearts, life would still be spent in a garden, and the world be one great paradise. While sin remains in the world, while our lives are disfigured and our hearts defiled by its presence, the cross will have to be borne, if at least we seek to be purified from it, and enter into the joy of the garden of the Lord.

III.—THE THIRD ASPECT OF LIFE IS REPRESENTED BY A SEPULCHRE. There is also in the garden, though for a time hidden from our view, a sepulchre. Strange, is it not, that the joyful and the gloomy should be so near each other? Yet so it is. The garden has in it both a cross and a sepulchre. The garden is the preparation for the cross, and the cross for the sepulchre. That which is crucified is buried. How many hopes, once likely to be realized, have we buried out of our sight? How many wishes which we would fain have seen carried out, have been consigned to the grave? Many bright imaginings of future happiness, many nicely arranged plans of future action have had to be relinquished for ever. How much that we prized and treasured have we seen taken from us and consigned to the sepulchre? The friends that started life with us, and were for a time our companions, have passed into the darkness of the tomb. Those who were near and dear to us, with whom we held communion close and true, who watched and cared for us all through the years of our youth, who prayed over us and blessed us, and made us feel the strength and sincerity of their love, have been taken from us and now sleep amid the silence and gloom of the sepulchre. And we, too, as we look forward, behold a sepulchre waiting for us, an empty tomb in which we one day shall be placed. Do we not think it hard sometimes that life should end thus amid such darkness, such silence, and such mystery?

The garden, the cross, the sepulchre—each represents an experience which we either have passed through, or must pass through. As the Egyptians used to have a skeleton placed in a position of prominence at their feasts, to remind them of their latter end, so let us keep in view the experiences that await us; but while in their case it was to call to remembrance the Epicurean maxim, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die," let the vision of such realities help us to a thoughtful, yet none the less earnest, conduct of our lives.

There are, however, some encouraging thoughts in our text. First: *Our crosses are always in gardens.* Side by side with the painful experiences of the cross, there is the joy which springs from the garden that lies all around. If there is no joy which is

not touched with pain, there is no sorrow without some ray of gladness. If we have to bear the cross, it is that we may gain the crown. God makes us lay down our life that we may find it. He makes us renounce inferior and temporary pleasures for "fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore." And even now, during the present life, our cross is in a garden. If we have many crosses we have many blessings, and are not our blessings in excess of our crosses? There is a garden for all, whatever the stage of life they have reached, even for the oldest; a garden, perhaps, in which the autumn tints are prominent, but which is none the less beautiful.

And, Secondly: *The surroundings of the garden take away the gloom of the sepulchre.* The grave is soon hidden by the waving grass. We are cheered when we think that what our friends have left in the grave, and what we, too, shall leave in the grave, is only an encumbrance. The grave is but, as it were, a dust heap, on which we throw the material rubbish which has all along been as a drag upon our spiritual powers. That which is fleshly, material, and decaying; that which impeded our truest progress is buried, while our spirits enter into the felicity of those who love the Redeemer. Gloomy as are the associations of a grave, we know that the day will come when our friends and we, too, shall rise again, as flowers rise in the spring, clothed in the beauty and glory of our ever living Redeemer.

In conclusion, let me say to the young, with whom life is as yet but a garden, there lie hidden in that garden, at present so beautiful and enchanting, both a cross and a sepulchre, and they wait for *you*. But Jesus has borne the cross, and has passed through the darkness of the grave, and now sits at the right hand of God in glory everlasting. He has done this for you and for me, and we need simply to throw ourselves in lowly penitence and trustfulness at His feet and He will enable us manfully to bear our cross, and will go with us through the darkness and the gloom of the sepulchre, and bring us to that land where there shall be "no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."

ARBROATH, N. B.

ALEX. R. MILNE, M.A.

### The Honour of Believing in Christ.

“FOR YOU, THEREFORE, WHICH BELIEVE IS THE PRECIOUSNESS.”  
—1 *Pet.* ii. 7. (R. V.)

MANY will, doubtless, feel some regret at the loss in the Revised New Testament of the familiar words, “Unto you, therefore, which believe He is precious.” The marginal reading of the Revised Version is even preferable to that of our text, “For you, therefore which believe is the *honour*.”

If, however, we have lost the words, we have not lost, what is far more important, the thought that underlies them. The apostle here enforces the necessity of faith in Christ, and speaks of the honour which is the result of such faith. He thus confronts a prevalent state of mind in the present day. Men object to be told that they must believe in order to know the truth, the power, the value of Christianity. They forget that faith, in the sense of believing, is the axle on which the wheels of the world turn; or, perhaps, more nearly, the linch-pin which keeps the wheels on the axle.

*Faith is the condition of all knowledge.* The student of Natural Science believes that there are hidden secrets of nature, laws unknown as yet, which will be revealed to patient investigation, and, therefore, he is willing to wait years for the development of his thought and the verification of results. Because he believes this, he laboriously toils and patiently waits.

*Faith is the condition of all enterprise.* It is because men believe, not merely in the possibility, but in the probability of the success of an undertaking that they are willing to engage in it, and even to incur toil and risk.

*Nay, more, faith is the condition of existence.* We eat because we believe that food is necessary and will nourish us. We fear not to lie down and sleep because we believe that the dawn will dispel the darkness, that we shall arise with recruited energies, and go forth with new vigour to another day's duties. We rest at home or walk abroad because we believe in the stability of nature's laws and the goodwill of our fellow men. Without faith we can do nothing. Without faith we should cease to exist.

*Faith, which is the condition of everything else, itself rests on*



*conditions, and compliance with those conditions involves the believer in much "honour."* It depends on knowledge, on experience, *i.e.*, on evidence. Resting on the past, it reaches forward with hope and expectation to the future. Without evidence faith is impossible. It may rest upon very slight evidence. The faith of one man may rest on evidence which to another is very insufficient. But it rests on evidence sufficient to the man at the time, or it ceases to exist. We believe many things because we have been told them, but our faith does not rest merely on the fact that we have been told, but on our past knowledge and experience of the veracity and trustworthiness of our informant. There is no such thing as so-called "blind faith," *i.e.*, faith which rests on no evidence. There may be weak faith, because the evidence is insufficient; there may be foolish faith, because the evidence is improbable; there may be credulous faith which believes too readily on the least particle of evidence, but faith must rest on something, or on some person. Man cannot live without faith, and faith cannot exist without evidence.

*Nor does faith rest on evidence simply, but on an emotion, on the feeling which the evidence excites, and on the will which is thereby awakened and influenced.* A little evidence, even untrustworthy evidence, if it excites strong feeling, will awaken a faith utterly disproportionate to the evidence adduced; and if it is in accordance with a man's inclination, will often sway his will without due regard to right and wrong.

We might thus trace back the source and origin of the feeling and will which are thus excited and swayed. But enough has been said to show the groundlessness of the objection to Christianity that it demands faith. Everything demands faith; everything depends on prior conditions. Hence in perfect accordance with all the facts of nature, with all the testimony of experience the apostle lays down faith as the condition of knowing, realizing the preciousness of Christ, of attaining the honour which is the result of believing. "For you that believe is the preciousness, or the honour."

*What then is the faith in Christ which is the condition of this*

*honour?* What do we believe about Jesus Christ? What are we called upon to believe, and on what evidence?

i. Ascending from the lower to the higher, we believe *first in Jesus Christ as the ideal man*, the perfection of humanity, who sets before us in His character and conduct the life for which we were created; the life which we may, and therefore ought to attain. Conscious of imperfection, stirred by restless aspirations after something nobler and better, the best men in all ages have longed for an ideal man. The Psalmist expressed his longing for such perfect humanity when he sang, "Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly," &c. Philosophers of old, Socrates, Plato, Zeno, Epictetus, Seneca, sought all their lifetime to find this perfect humanity, but in vain, they could not find it on earth; they could not even find anything absolutely perfect in human nature on which to build their faith that such perfection was possible. We have such a ground of assurance in Jesus Christ, an assurance of human perfection, not only possible, but attainable by us. "Jesus Christ, the ideal man," is our answer to those who ask what we believe, and what must be believed in order to have fulness of joy and peace.

(a) Faith in the perfect humanity of Christ *brings with it the assurance of immortal life* and of undying sympathy. Such a man as Jesus Christ, regarding Him merely from the stand-point of His earthly manifestation, could not cease to live when His physical powers yielded to what we call death; He could not have been annihilated. Our mind revolts from the thought, refuses to accept the conclusion to which some, building upon the foundations of Christianity, have educated themselves, viz.—that the only future life possible for even the best of men is the influence of their character and example upon succeeding generations. We could not believe in a God who allowed such a life to end with the few short years which He spent on earth, and which were so violently and suddenly ended by the cruel wickedness of men.

(b) And as we think of Him living still, *we feel assured of His sympathy with us*. For His perfection was not something inherent in Himself, something necessary and unavoidable, but a perfection attained through conflict and suffering. Made in all

things like unto His brethren, He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. He "learned obedience by the things that He suffered; having been made perfect, He became to all them that obey Him the Author of eternal salvation." As the natural conclusion, therefore, from the contemplation of His perfection, from the conviction of His immortality, from the remembrance of His struggles and sufferings, comes the thought of His sympathy with us in our conflicts and trials.

ii. From the belief in the perfect humanity of Jesus Christ *we rise to a higher faith in His Divinity, His Deity*. For we find that He stands alone in His sinlessness, in His perfection. And we learn, from His own lips, that He was, in a special, unique sense, the Son of God; that God was His Father, and that He was one with God, even while for our sakes He lived as a man upon this earth; that He was "God manifest in the flesh." To deny the simple, straightforward meaning of His words is to deny His perfection, to reduce Him to the level of a quibbling logician, or a skilful diplomatist. He could not be perfect, guileless, and speak falsely, or even misleadingly. The Jews understood Him to claim a special relationship to God, and even equality with Him, and were, therefore, ready to stone Him for blasphemy, but He never even suggested the possibility that they had misunderstood Him. To accept His words, in their plain and unmistakeable meaning, is the only way to allow of His perfection. Hence we attain to a further faith in Him; not merely as a loving, sympathizing Friend, but as an Almighty Helper.

This is, I believe, the real genesis and growth of true faith in Christ. It is through His humanity that we rise to the conception of His Deity. "The person of Christ is the perennial glory and strength of Christianity." Christianity does not depend for proof upon signs and wonders, upon miracles or prophecy, but upon Christ, upon the beauty and power of His life. So long as men "revere the holy and love the good," Christ cannot fail to attract and bow their hearts. As the fabled Orpheus is said to have "charmed nature into listening and life," so "the moral loveliness of Christ" has attracted the most sinful, even the most hostile, subdued the most obdurate, and inspired the noblest.

The lives of such men as Paul, Augustine, Bunyan, Wilberforce, Howard, Livingstone bear unanimous testimony to the power of Christ, and unite to prove His preciousness to the world and to us.

It was because man could not otherwise know God, that God thus manifested Himself. God in Christ has been dawning upon men for the last 1,800 years, and is dawning still. We have not yet reached the meridian splendour, the full manifestation of all God is in Himself, and all that He is to us. The apostle Peter knew Jesus Christ first of all merely as a man; but as His more than human power and wisdom and love dawned on him he learned the greater truth, and was gradually prepared to make the full confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." We may not all have passed through this process of reasoning about Christ, or we may not be conscious of it. Our faith in those who taught us about Christ in our childhood was such that we accepted Him as our Saviour and Friend without ever questioning His claims or examining His perfections. And if we have really accepted Him as the Saviour in whom we trust, the Friend in whom we confide, the Master whom we obey, the King whom we delight to honour, we have a faith now, grounded on personal experience, which is independent of any outward reasoning. We have tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious. But if any are "tempest-tossed in sunless seas of doubt," it is through the perfect humanity of Christ that they will attain to faith in His Deity; to the assurance of His fulness, His ability to train their weakness into strength; a fulness and power and willing love which constitute His preciousness, which are the honour of those who believe. "He that believeth on Him shall not be put to shame."

iii. *The faith attained through looking at Christ, meditating on Christ, reasoning about Christ, is developed and perfected by experience.* Experience is the test of faith, of its value or worthlessness. The strongest faith, that which cannot be shaken, is that which rests on personal experience. The experience of others is a help and guide to the development of our own faith, and often serves first to awaken it. But if, taking Him at His word, we have proved Him for ourselves; if, not content with



looking into His Kingdom, we have entered ; if, in our darkness we have turned to Him for light ; if, in our sinfulness we have gone to Him for forgiveness and renewal ; if, in our weakness we have leaned on His strength ; if, in our sickness and disappointment, our anxiety and fear, we have striven to lie still, to be still, because we were in His arms, because He was watching over us, then we have a ground of assurance of which nothing can rob us, a peace which nothing else can give, and which nothing can take away. Like the men of Sychar, who were attracted to Christ by the words of the Woman of Samaria, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that ever I did : can this be the Christ ?" Our testimony will be, "Now we believe, not because of Thy speaking ;" not because of others' experience of which we have been told ; "for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."

Unto you that believe is the honour—What honour ?

I.—IT IS THE HONOUR OF BUILDING ON A FOUNDATION WHICH CAN NEVER GIVE WAY. It is the safety of having an unfailing refuge in which to hide. It is the blessedness of having a friend who will never fail, never forsake us. Because it is contained in Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious (or honourable, *i. e.*, worthy of all honour), and he that believeth on Him shall not be put to shame." Not only does past experience justify and assure our faith, but we are reminded that Christ's own word is pledged that our faith shall never be disappointed. "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." "Because I live, ye shall live also." "Of His fulness we all received, and grace for grace." "The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," He goes before us in every new and untried path of life ; and every day, as we follow, He, the Good Shepherd, will lead us in the right way. It is our honour to know that the past proves His forgiving love, and that the future is assured by His unchanging faithfulness. We have an experience of which nothing can rob us, and a hope that maketh not ashamed, which will never disappoint, as the anchor of our soul.

"Unto you that believe is the honour."

II.—MAN'S HIGHEST HONOUR IS TO RENDER HOMAGE TO PERFECT

LOVE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS; AND THE TRUEST HOMAGE IMITATES THAT BEFORE WHICH IT BOWS IN REVERENCE. Dishonouring Christ, men dishonour themselves. To refuse to believe in Christ, to refuse to accept His teachings, to refuse to follow His example, to refuse to bow to His authority or to yield to His love, is to reject and dishonour that which commends itself to the universal intellect and conscience of man as purest, noblest, truest and most estimable. Still is it true that He is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, for they stumble at the word, being disobedient; true also that unto you who believe is the honour of worshipping and imitating the perfection of righteousness and love.

Many may admire a picture which only one could paint, and the consciousness of inability would prevent them from attempting to emulate the artist whose work fills them with delight and wonder. But if the artist were to offer to enable us to do what he had done, and assure us of his power to do so by the example and experience of numbers who had been taught by him, should we not gladly accept such an offer? Such an offer Christ makes to everyone. He sets before us in His life, a purity, a nobility, a righteousness which we cannot attain by ourselves, but which He can and will help us to attain. The faith which is the condition of all knowledge, of all enterprise, of all existence, which is, therefore, the condition of salvation, of knowing and proving the preciousness of Christ, depends on our will. If we are willing to learn, He will teach us; if we are willing to follow, He will lead us; if we are willing to fight against evil, He will make us more than conquerors; if we are willing to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, He will give us sufficient grace and make His strength perfect in our weakness.

III.—THE HONOUR IS THAT OF TESTIFYING TO THE POWER AND GRACE OF THIS SAVIOUR AND FRIEND OF MAN, THE HONOUR OF MAKING HIM KNOWN TO OTHERS. We can only do this as we believe in Him ourselves, and our life must prove our faith. For you that believe is the honour of extending His kingdom, of commending His grace to men, of persuading others to believe, of multiplying the triumphs of His righteousness and love.

BRIGHTON.

A. F. JOSCELYNE, B.A.

### David's Prosperity.

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"AND DAVID WENT ON, AND GREW GREAT, AND THE LORD GOD OF HOSTS WAS WITH HIM.—2 *Samuel* v. 10.

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DAVID, who had reigned in Hebron over Judah for seven years and a-half, had just been proclaimed king over all the tribes. (Verses 1-3.) The people recognised his public services and his kingly qualities, as well as the fact that he was the Lord's appointed. For once, the voice of the people and the voice of God were as one. David's first act, as king of all Israel, was to take possession of the ancient city of Jerusalem. The city belonged to the portion of Benjamin, but the Jebusites had been suffered to dwell among the Benjamites, and had so increased that it had come to be commonly spoken of as a city of the Jebusites. They naturally resented the purpose of the king, and defied him with bitter words. This but served to arouse his martial ardour, and he justified the confidence reposed in him by the people, by taking the stronghold, making it his residence, and giving it his name. "And David went on," &c.

I.—WHAT DAVID DID.—"He went on."

1. He "went on" *with his appointed work*. David knew that God had appointed for him the labours, and responsibilities, and honours of kingship. Had known it from time when Samuel selected him from among his brethren. The spirit of the Lord had been upon him. Through all the trying scenes that followed he, no doubt, had the feeling that God was preparing him for a greater work and heavier burdens by-and-by.

David was not alone in this. Every man has a work given him by God. It may be a lowly work, but, for all that, just as honourable, just as Divine, as that of a crowned king. David was, above all things, a servant of God, and every man may be that if he will! True, the phrase "servant of God," was sometimes used in a special sense, as of Moses and the prophets; and still we use it of men serving Him in a special way. But there

is no reason why the honourable appellation should be confined to these. The missionary, who goes to preach Christ to the heathen, is a "servant of God"; so is the godly merchant whose ships visit the same lands for purposes of trade. The man called of God to preach the Gospel at home is a "servant of God;" so, also, may be the tradesman, the artisan, the labourer, if but each does his duty as in His sight,—“with good will, doing service as to the Lord, and not to men.” “Ye serve the Lord Christ,” is a declaration none may monopolise. It applies to all who live true lives.

2. He “went on” *in the face of opposition*. He was opposed by the Jebusites, and later by the Philistines. With him the path of duty was often the path of difficulty; a fact for which we may well be thankful. No man could have bequeathed us such a heritage as we have in David’s Psalms, who had lived always under clear skies and sailed in calm waters! Our present point is that, amid all opposition, he “went on.” He did not turn at the terrible presence of Goliath, nor renounce all hope when Saul threatened his life, nor resign his claim to the crown when Saul’s son was set up in opposition to him, nor withdraw his army when the Jebusites defied him; he “went on.” In this let him be a pattern for us. If we are in the path of duty, let us go forward! ’Tis patient *going on* that wins! In school and college, in workshop and office, perseverance triumphs. Even so is it in the godly life. “He that endureth to the end shall be saved.” Having put our hand to the plough we may not look back. “To *patient faith* the prize is sure,” &c.

II.—WHAT DAVID BECAME. He “grew great.” David “grew great” in his kingly power, and honours, and victories, great in the eyes of his foes, and great in the estimation of his subjects.

It is not the lot of all men to become great. The large majority have to be content with mediocrity, while not a few fall beneath even that. Most natures possess a spark of wholesome ambition, but in many cases it has become smothered and buried! Many throw away splendid opportunities of becoming at any rate greater than they are. The idler, the spendthrift, the drunkard, &c. Such never become great, unless it be great



fools! Ambition may be worthy or unworthy. He who aspires to be great in an honourable calling by honourable means, to push his way by dint of hard work to the front, is surely to be commended! An M.P. once declared that when he blacked boots he strove in that to excel all others. That honourable ambition carried him upward. But there is an ambition to be scorned by honest men. The trader who by crooked dealing seeks to outstrip his neighbour and makes haste to be rich; the statesman who can stoop to unworthy intrigue, who is ready to sacrifice the public good to serve his own ends; the hungry place-hunter who cares for himself first and nobody next; all these have an unworthy ambition which all who would grow truly great should avoid.

“Perish, policy and cunning,  
Perish, all that fears the light;  
Whether losing, whether winning,  
Trust in God and do the right.”

Let us grow great without sacrificing our integrity, or not at all! If we may not rise on the wings of righteousness let us be content to keep on the ground! Above all let, it be our aim to grow great morally and spiritually. This often forgotten. True greatness is greatness of soul, and all else is poor indeed! How may this greatness be achieved? There is only one way: by yielding ourselves unto Christ, the Lord and Saviour of souls. A commoner has often knelt at the feet of his sovereign and risen a nobleman. But moral ennoblement comes from a higher source. Tennyson's Arthur, speaking of the Knights of the Round Table, says:—

“I made them lay their hands in mine and swear  
To reverence the king as if he were  
Their conscience, and their conscience as their king,  
To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,  
To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,  
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,  
To honour his own word as if his God's,  
To live sweet lives in purest chastity.”

Write "Christ" instead of Arthur, and you have the patent of a higher nobility than earthly sovereign ever bestowed. Would you be great in the truest sort, in *faith*, in *love*, in *purity*? Then kneel at His feet who is your rightful King and your only Saviour, and hear Him say, "Rise and follow Me!"

III.—THE SECRET OF DAVID'S PROSPERITY. "The Lord God of hosts was with him." It is wonderful to note how really and constantly He was with David. God chose David to sit on the throne of Israel, and He sustained him. The same Hand that guided the stone to the head of the boastful giant, helped him always. That was why he "went on and grew great." The only way for any man to really prosper is to secure the presence, and guidance, and help of the Lord of hosts. If any would grow great unrighteously, let him put God as far from him as possible; but if righteously, let him seek Him. You are young, just entering upon your career; you will have difficulties from companions, &c. Cry unto God, "My Father, be Thou, &c. You are embarking in commercial enterprise. Take Him into the concern! Business men have said, "We cannot be honest and live!" Satan's own lie! With God's help you can. You have just made yourself a new home, assumed the responsibilities of the head of a household; erect an altar there and honour God in your home. Cleave unto Him with purpose of heart. You desire to "go on" in Christian experience, to "grow great" spiritually. God is the Sanctifier. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you." The secret of all real greatness is in *having* the Lord on our side.

How can we secure His presence and help? How did David secure these? (1) He *trusted* God. His psalms breathe the spirit of confidence. (2) He *acknowledged* and *consulted* Him. (3) He *obeyed* God. This was the rule and habit of his life. The same method of ensuring the Divine help is open to all.

CONCLUSION.—If we would go on and grow great, if we would prosper in all right ways we must *begin* to walk in those ways. Have we made the great commencement? He calls us now!

### Men as Trees Walking.

“AND HE LOOKED UP, AND SAID, I SEE MEN AS TREES, WALKING. AFTER THAT JESUS PUT HIS HANDS AGAIN UPON HIS EYES, AND MADE HIM LOOK UP: AND HE WAS RESTORED, AND SAW EVERY MAN CLEARLY.”—*Mark* viii. 24, 25.

THIS miracle is recorded only by Mark, and has features peculiarly its own. Christ had no stereotyped method by which He worked, but showed, by the infinite variety of His miracles, how absolutely free He was in the exercise of His Divine power and will. The blind man here brought before us does not seem to have exhibited the intense desire to be healed that was expressed by other blind men who applied to Christ. He is brought by others, and does not utter any earnest entreaty. Those who brought him plead for the “*touch*” of the Great Healer, thus showing they had faith in the *ease*, as well as *efficacy*, with which the cure might be effected. These men belonged to Bethsaida, and had seen already many of the wonderful works of Christ without profiting by them as they ought: so Christ declined to work this miracle before their eyes. Taking the blind man by the hand He led him out of the town and performed the work privately. The men of the town did not show interest enough to follow Jesus to see what He would do, and Jesus showed His disapproval of their indifference by commanding the cured man not to return to the town but to go to his own home. The peculiar features of this miracle are, (1) It was performed *secretly* and (2) *gradually*. Nearly all our Lord’s miracles were *public* and *instantaneous*, as well as *merciful* and *complete*. Let us see what we may learn from the peculiarity of the incident before us. We have—

I.—AN EMBLEM OF THE ORDINARY BEGINNING OF SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT. Conversion is spoken of in Scripture as a translation from darkness to light, as well as a resurrection from death unto life. Sometimes, as in the case of Saul, the light flashes suddenly, and, as in the case of Bartimæus, sight is given immediately; but, as a rule, spiritual enlightenment is gradual in its growth and steady in its progress. Only in few places on our earth does the light of day flash suddenly, changing night

into day; as a rule the shades of night gradually disappear, and the day dawns by degrees. The blind man could not distinguish at first between men and trees; and in moral enlightenment the young convert has at first very vague and indistinct ideas of spiritual things. He sees and feels sure that a new world has opened around and above him, but he is only an infant in discernment and needs further and fuller light. Ideas about God, truth, eternity, righteousness, the relative claims of things seen and unseen, all are confused and need development; and even at the best we see only as through a glass darkly, and know only in part. Young converts must not be *impatient* or *discouraged* because light seems to come so slowly, because their spiritual perception seems at first so short and weak. The cure of the blind man here mentioned was as real as those cases where the cures were instantaneous, and "the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The parables of our Lord teach us there is "*Progress of Being*," and that the most glorious results in spiritual life develop from apparently insignificant beginnings. Let us be thankful if we feel the Great Healer has touched our eyes and made us see; and, if our sight at present is only imperfect, let us not leave Him, we shall see more clearly yet, and have vision of greater things as the enlightening influences of His Spirit are vouchsafed to us. That we have any spiritual vision—by which we see ourselves as guilty and needing pardon, Christ as our Saviour, ready and able to forgive, and religion as the one thing needful—is a proof that the merciful and healing hand of Christ has been laid upon us, and that virtue from Him has come into us.

II.—THE MEANS BY WHICH SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT ORDINARILY BECOMES COMPLETED. In the case before us there was (1) *Repeated contact with Christ*. Not that Christ was unable or unwilling to perfect the recovery at once: but to teach important lessons upon spiritual recovery, for all time, He put His hand *again* upon the blind man's eyes. It is not enough that we come *once* to Christ, that we get enlightenment so that we see men as trees walking, we must keep with Him and have renewed applications of His power to save. To be without Him, is to walk in darkness; to have fellowship with Him, is to have the light of



life. (2) *Obedient looking to Heaven.* Christ made the man "look up." He had been long enough hanging down his head, he was to look away from men and trees to the source of all light and life; and, as he made use (in obedience to Christ) of the imperfect vision he had, clearer light dawned upon him, he was made whole. We are commanded to look up, away from self and sin; look up to the cross at the *crucified One*; look up to the throne to the *crowned One*, to the Lamb that was slain, but who has risen and now reigns for ever. Let us set our affections on things above, and where the heart is fixed the eyes will turn. In proportion as we "look up" will our spiritual vision become stronger and clearer. (3) *Quiet spiritual reflection.* The man was not to rush back to the noisy town of Bethsaida, he was not at once to become a preacher, and bear testimony to the change which had been effected in him, but to show by a new life what had been done for him. This is an aspect of religious life too little thought of to-day. There is not only an *impatience for results of preaching*, but a *morbid greediness for immediate testimony*. It would be well for many converts to take the advice of the Redeemer and go home and make their family circle brighter and better, before they rush into the town and talk loudly about what they very imperfectly understand. We need more of thoughtful meditation and solemn, calm reflection, that religion may take deeper root downward, and bear, ultimately, richer fruit upward. There will not be much real soul progress without secret soul communion with Christ, *undisturbed and unobserved* by our fellow men.

How *gently*, as well as *gradually*, the work was done. "He put His hands upon him." He touched his eyes, and the touch was so gentle and gracious that soft, sweet light streamed in upon them. So gently does Christ deal with human souls; He is a tender Physician, infinitely kind to all who come to Him for spiritual aid. To each of us He will impart increasing light in answer to earnest prayer—in conjunction with the use of the light we have—till the day shall dawn and all the shadows of earth shall pass away,—then we shall see Him as He is, and praise Him as we ought.

CLIFTON,

FREDERICK W. BROWN.

## Seedlings.

### Days of the Christian Year.

John vi. 6.

(*Fourth Sunday in Lent.*)

"WHENCE ARE WE TO BUY BREAD, THAT THESE MAY EAT? AND THIS HE SAID TO PROVE HIM: FOR HE HIMSELF KNEW WHAT HE WOULD DO."

THE insertion by the evangelist of this explanatory clause provides us with some serviceable explanations in the life problems we are called to confront. It suggests to us—

I.—THAT IF WE WOULD FIND THE MEANING OF CHRIST WE MAY HAVE TO LOOK BENEATH THE SURFACE. The thought that was in His mind at this time was not indicated directly by the question which He asked. He was not wishful to know where bread could be bought, but what Philip thought was possible under the circumstances. His intention lay deeper than it seemed at first sight. We must not always assume that the apparent purpose of the Ruler and Redeemer of human hearts and lives is the only or the principal one. When God gives or takes away, when He makes plain or difficult, when He presents or withdraws opportunity, it may be that He has a design

for our good, different from the obvious one, deeper, wiser, larger.

II.—THAT WHEN GOD APPEARS TO BE SEEKING HIS OWN END HE IS SEEKING OURS. Christ seemed to ask this question chiefly or wholly that He Himself might be delivered from an embarrassing situation; not so, however; He was really seeking to develop and deepen the faith of His disciple. "He Himself knew what He would do." Christ is making many demands on us, requiring our thought, our faith, our affection, our obedience, our activity in His cause, our patient submission to His will. It may seem to us that He makes these demands for His own sake. Doubtless He does desire to have the worship and the service of His intelligent creation because this is His due, and because He delights to receive it. For us to withhold our attention, our devotion, our consecration, our submission—this is poverty, weakness, misery, death. For us to grant it is riches, strength, joy, life everlasting.

III.—THAT CHRIST HAS RESOURCES OF WISDOM AND STRENGTH WHEN OUR METHODS HAVE FAILED. Philip could not imagine what

should be done if a large quantity of bread could not be bought. But "He Himself knew what He would do." He knew that bread and fish were to be obtained through other than the familiar sources. His unfailing wisdom, His inexhaustible power would supply them. As those who have generous regard to the spiritually famishing multitudes, we may think that the case is hopeless and the millions doomed; but there are resources in the Divine mind of which we have not taken account. The All-wise and Almighty Lord knows what He will do, what measures He will take, and how He will minister to the souls of men that are hungered and athirst.

IV.—THAT OUR SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE WILL EXPLAIN MUCH OF THE DIVINE PROCEDURE. "This He said to prove him." Christ said many things to prove His disciples; notably, those words of His which followed the miracle He was about to work (vv. 33-56). These "proved" the superficiality, the conventionalism, the fickleness of the many (vv. 60-66); and they proved also the trustfulness and the loyalty of the few (vv. 67, 68). Now, by His teaching, Christ is proving (testing) the thoughtfulness, the studiousness, the docility, the fidelity of His disciples. Many are found wanting; some are not only proved thereby,

but approved therein. But it is chiefly by His providential dealing with us that our Lord is trying us, and is showing to others and to ourselves "of whose fold we be."

(a) When He withholds a sense of forgiveness and acceptance from the seeking soul, *this* He does to prove it, to test the depth and sincerity of its conviction and to deepen its devotion. (b) When He allows His children to struggle in straightened circumstances, or (c) To be long perplexed which outward path to choose, though seeking Divine direction therein, *this* He does to prove them, to test their faith, and to lead them to continued prayerfulness. (d) When He removes the treasure, the precious thing, or the beloved one from the sight and grasp, *this* He does to prove us, to test our trust in Him and our submission to His will, and to lead us to seek our substance in "that which is above," our fellowship in Him "who abideth for evermore."

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#### John viii. 50.

(Fifth Sunday in Lent.)

"I SEEK NOT MINE OWN GLORY:  
THERE IS ONE THAT SEEKETH AND  
JUDGETH."

IN our human experience it is continually occurring that when we seek one good thing we find

another. Seeking the prize and the position in school, the boy finds knowledge; seeking the joy of reciprocated love, the young man finds a home and those sacred relationships which enlarge and ennoble human life; seeking an honourable maintenance, a man finds himself attaining some of those mental and moral habits which go far to constitute a true character, &c., &c. So was it with our great Lord; seeking not His own glory, but the approval of the Divine Father and the redemption of the race, He found Himself established as a beneficent Sovereign to whom all His disciples bring their reverent homage, the holy laws of whose heavenly kingdom growing multitudes of mankind rejoicingly obey. The words of the Lord suggest to us—

I.—THE ESSENTIAL SPIRIT OF CHRISTIAN LIFE—SELF-RENUNCIATION. It is a great, indeed a vital question, What is the essence of personal Christianity? Membership of a particular church, acceptance of a certain creed, passage through initiatory rites, attention to prescribed ordinances, disposal of worldly substance, regularity of behaviour,—all these are important things, by no means to be despised or disparaged. But they are not decisive. The crucial point is this, we must know *the spirit we are*

*of.* He whose spirit is that of irreverence, of worldliness, of selfishness, stands outside the kingdom of God, within whatever gates of man's construction he may be found. But he who "seeks not his own," who has felt the supreme claims of his Heavenly Father, of his Divine Redeemer, and who has gone to Him in glad self-surrender, who has been constrained by the love of Christ to live no longer unto himself but unto Him who died for him (2 Cor. v. 14, 15),—he it is who has passed from death unto life, and is a citizen of the kingdom of God.

II.—THE NOBILITY OF THIS SPIRIT OF SELF-RENUNCIATION. (a) *The noblest men* that have ever lived are the men who have lived for the well-being of their kind, becoming the unselfish servants of their race. (b) *The angels of God*,—"are they not all ministering spirits?" (c) *The Son of Man, Himself*, came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom (Mark x. 45). He did not stand upon His right. He deliberately laid down His claims; elected to forego what He might have insisted upon; stooped to the lowliest offices of human service; consented even to bow His head in ignominy and shame. And now that He has thus stooped and renounced, self-surrender has become invested



with highest honour. Christ has for ever consecrated it; has conferred on it the patent of nobility.

III.—ITS JUSTIFICATION IN THE FUTURE. "There is One that seeketh." Christ could well afford to leave all His claims to honour out of account, because though He, Himself, sought other things, there was One, the Omniscient and Almighty One, who *was* seeking and would certainly secure it for Him in due time. Glory was His "native right," and was the fair guerdon of His redeeming work; but He need not concern Himself about it. The future would justify His unconcern, for the Divine Father would so direct all things that some day He should be exalted and extolled and be made very high. So His devoted servant, who is least concerned about his own claim to honour, may take the same consolation to his heart, may find rest in the same calm assurance.

IV.—ITS SUFFICIENCY FOR THE PRESENT. "There is One that judgeth." Men were misjudging, mistaking, misrepresenting; they were attributing to demoniac influence that which was due to the Divine; they were dishonouring Him who was living and was about to die for them (v. 49). It did not greatly matter; there was One who was judging righteously, —the Judge of all; whose smile

(Ps. xxx. 5) rested on the well-beloved Son and turned darkness into day. "Better the smile of God alway, than the voice of man's consent." In the midst of much misjudgment and misrepresentation, we may lift up our head as we realize that "the Lord thinketh upon us," that there is One, at least, who judges righteously and who knows the integrity of our heart.

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### Matthew xxvii. 27-30.

(*Palm Sunday.*)

"THEN THE SOLDIERS OF THE GOVERNOR TOOK JESUS INTO THE COMMON HALL, AND GATHERED UNTO HIM THE WHOLE BAND OF SOLDIERS. AND THEY STRIPPED HIM, AND PUT ON HIM A SCARLET ROBE. AND WHEN THEY HAD PLATTED A CROWN OF THORNS THEY PUT IT UPON HIS HEAD, AND A REED IN HIS RIGHT HAND: AND THEY BOWED THE KNEE BEFORE HIM, AND MOCKED HIM, SAYING, HAIL, KING OF THE JEWS! AND THEY SPIT UPON HIM, AND TOOK THE REED, AND SMOTE HIM ON THE HEAD."

THESE words bring vividly before us the mockers and the mocked in the hour that is the climax of the history of scorn in our world. We notice—

I.—THE MOCKERS. They were (a) *Numerous*. The whole band of soldiers, being a tenth of a legion and so numbering many hundreds, were the scorers. They were (b) *Mercenary*. All hired, it is likely that many joined in the expressions of contumely just because they were paid for obeying orders. They were (c) *Malignant*. The inventions of their scorn indicate the virulence of their animus. The mock purple, the mock crown, the mock sceptre were the deliberate suggestions of cruelty. And when they "spat" upon the Lord the baseness of their natures seem to have broken down all barriers. We behold, and now with profound reverence—

II.—THE MOCKED. The Lord of life and glory is (1) *Bitterly wronged*. He had endured all that the meanest criminal could endure. But the unspeakable wrong was that He who loved so infinitely should be hated so utterly. Love's thorns are ingratitude, ridicule, derision, enmity. And these thorns pierced Christ. He is (2) *Sublimely patient*. Such scorn provokes no rebuke, awakens no murmur in Him. He is (3) *Sublimely superior*. He who seems to be the sport of that crowd is morally their Sovereign. He who seems to be a waif on the waves of their wild scorn is indeed the Rock of Ages. There is a world

of meaning in Pilate's sentence to that surging mass of human deformities, "Behold the *Man*." Our contemplation of these mockers and that mocked One yields us—First: *A regulation for our ambition*. The Divinest was thus publicly degraded. The Christ of Christians was thus hissed off the theatre of human life; shall His followers bid for the very opposite lot. The Christian must not deprecate apparent defeat, nor be alarmed even at disgrace. Second: *A measure of the value of scorn*. (1) We need not count it a terrible evil to endure. (2) We may not reckon it a fitting weapon to employ (Psalm i. 1). Third: *A pattern in the endurance of insult*. Far from being insensitive, Christ was evidently the tenderest of men, and yet He sublimely suffered all that the fiercest contempt could invent or utter. His devotion to His work, His communion with His Father, His pity for the men that were wronging Him, made Him, as they make us, conqueror in such an hour. Fourth: *An indication of the vastness of Christ's sacrifice*. One cannot read the account now open before us without finding ever new force in St. Paul's declaration, "Be it known unto you through this man is preached forgiveness of sin."

EDITOR.

CHRIST CONTEMPLATING  
HIS CROSS AND HIS KINGDOM.

John xii. 32.

(For Good Friday.)

"AND I, IF I BE LIFTED UP,  
WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME."

OUR Lord had just taken His solemn farewell of the temple, because of the growing rejection of Him by the Jews. As He was leaving He was met by "certain Greeks," who had come to Philip with the simple words that have been as the highway of salvation ever since—"Sir, we would see Jesus." It was the first time that, with His bodily eyes, He had seen the coming to Him of the Gentiles, the first time since the unremembered hour of infancy when the Magi bowed before Him. And so at the moment of parting there fell upon His sad face, sad with the woe He had pronounced, this ray of the glory of which Isaiah sang, "And the Gentiles shall come to Thy light, and kings to the brightness of Thy rising." Now our Lord being also a man, was necessarily moved in His thinking and in His heart by the laws of human association and contrast, and so the sight of these first-fruits of the Gentiles brought to His mind the time when that glory should have fully come, when not these strangers only should be "drawn" to Him, but

"all men." Nor would He be less reminded of it by the very rejection of the Jews, for how could He depart from them without thinking of His return? how be in this sorrow without looking on to the joy of restoration? Thus the Gentiles and the Jews, both, conspired to build up in His thoughts, at this hour of desolate departure, the vision of the time when, in His own words, He should "draw all men." From the greeting of these Greek strangers and from the rejection of the Jews there flowed through the heart of Christ this sublimest of all hope—"I will draw all men unto Me." He saw His *kingdom*; He saw also what was on the way to it—His *cross*. "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."

Our Lord appears here, if we may humbly venture the expression, as the wrestler fully trained for His contest with trial, as the great Model Wrestler with suffering. And it has this interest for us that here, perhaps, better than anywhere, we may learn ourselves how to wrestle in trial and meet our cross. Our Lord prepared Himself for His cross with *every* help.

I.—FROM NATURE. Spiritual sloth keeps many Christians from following God as they ought to follow Him in nature. They never think of studying Him there with

the thoroughness and zeal that true love prompts. Hence in their trial they are punished with the loss of the spiritual equipments and resources that are to be gathered there. Christ lived, mentally, spiritually, in nature. Thoughts and images from nature were always falling from Him. He dived deeper into nature than the Old Testament saints, to some of whom, nevertheless, nature was as the spiritual air they breathed. They saw, and saw well, in nature God's power, and His wisdom, and His mercy. Christ went right down to what we may call the evangelic side of nature—to its lesson of life through death. And so when we see Him here, facing His cross, He has His hand on the image, the fundamental law rather, of the "corn of wheat," which without death "abideth alone," but through death has "much fruit." Christ kept before Him, as evidently His dearest thought from nature, the march of that universal, evangelic law in nature, and the vast range of its blessing; and there, in that Divine tide of nature's highest life, He found strength, because in taking His cross He was putting Himself in harmony with it, in the line of its forces and channel of its grace. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth

alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

II.—FROM HUMAN LIFE. Our Lord found in this province, too, the vast place and power of the evangelic law. If a man will live for self, then life, in every sense worth calling life, will depart from him. Like the worm closed in by the ring of spider's web, man in the narrow ring of self dies—puts himself to death. Life is only life when it holds by love, whose very essence is self-denial for others. Christ but followed this law further than we see it. That dry, hard doctrine, as we think it, which He here utters, is but the final expansion and bloom of the law of love—"He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that *hateth*" ["hating" and "loving" the Hebrew used in contrast, simply as comparative terms, though there is a sense in which we may even "hate" the self-seeking life] "his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal." When, therefore, God puts before us a cross, He is only supplying the essential condition of love—self-denial *for Him* as well as for our fellows. Christ saw all the currents of man's being, and, therefore, the currents of His own being, setting to His cross; and seeing this He knew how to turn them into one broad stream of strength. Other sources of His



strength for cross-bearing appear here. Note one more. Our Lord drew power—

III.—FROM THE ANTICIPATION OF HIS TRIUMPH. This was the very heart of it. See the dominant place it has in His spirit, from the turn of His sentence—only a conquering hope could wield the dreadful thought of the cross like this—"I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." We are apt to think that Christ's mind was filled with dark images because He had so much to suffer. It would be far more true to say that with Him sunshine surrounded and crept over all. His life is told in a sentence—"Who *for the joy* set before Him endured the cross." He kept His cross standing in the light of its triumph. His "lifting up" was to Him ever the way to His Kingship over "all men." It

was this anticipation of joy that enabled Him to rise above the rejection of the Jews, and to turn the advent of these few Greeks into the signal of His coming "kingdom." His first words carry the ring of victory, and surround His cross with its halo—"The hour is come that the Son of Man should be *glorified*." Every sentence throbs with great words—"much fruit," "life eternal," "the prince of this world cast out," up to the crowning saying, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."

CONCLUSION.—Mark the power over our trials and crosses of "the joy that is set before us," and the duty, therefore, of securing that sunshine upon life.

PALMER GRENVILLE, B.A., LL.B.  
STROUD.

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FAITH; ITS REVELATIONS.—To the eye of Faith the Unseen and the Eternal are more real than the things seen and temporal; to the heart of Faith hopes are as actual as realities, and heavenly promises are more precious than earthly possessions. To the eyes of the unilluminated heart the region in which Faith lives and moves is a dark cavern where nothing is even visible, much less can anything be beautiful; but Faith carries in her hand a lamp kindled with light from Heaven, and wherever she moves an atmosphere of light is shed around her, and under every ray of it the streets and walls of the New Jerusalem seem to flash as with innumerable gems.—CANON FARRAR'S *Early Days of Christianity*.

## Breviaries.

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### The Psalmist's Plea for Pardon.

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“FOR THY NAME’S SAKE, O LORD, PARDON MINE INIQUITY; FOR IT IS GREAT.”—*Psalm xxv. 11.*

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WE have here I.—AN HONEST CONFESSION. “Mine iniquity is great.” (1) *Iniquity* is want of equity or conformity to what is right; it is out of harmony with the Divine law which is holy, just, and good. (2) *It is great.* (a) Great in number, (b) Turpitude, (c) Carrying its direful effects down to posterity. (3) *It is mine, and the only thing that is mine,* for although we have tempters to sin and accomplices in iniquity, still it is our own; we cannot be compelled to sin, and we should not be induced to transgress. II.—AN EARNEST PRAYER. “O Lord, for Thy Name’s sake, pardon mine iniquity.” (1) *That “Oh,” comes from the inmost recesses of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.* (2) *It is addressed to the proper source,* “Oh Lord, pardon mine iniquity,” none can forgive sins but God. With the Lord there is mercy, &c. (3) *The reason for its exercise.* “For Thy Name’s sake.” The reason is found in God only, in me there is everything to repel and provoke, every mouth is stopped, and the whole world is become guilty; Oh Lord, forgive for Thy love’s sake, yea, for Thy Son’s sake, in consideration of His great voluntary sacrifice for sin, and do it now. III.—AN INGENIOUS PLEA. “Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great;” then it should be punished; nay, Jesus died, and therefore God can be just, and the justifier of them who believe in Jesus. (1) Pardon my great iniquity *and it will be greatly to Thy glory;* the glory of Thy grace and truth, Thy character and government. It will shew the Father and the Sovereign. (2) “Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great,” *and it will be greatly to my advantage.* Thy favour is life and Thy loving-kindness is better than life. It will be rest to my soul, peace to my conscience. It will generate gratitude and promote usefulness. (3) “Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great,” *and it will be greatly to the good of others,* many shall see it and fear, and shall turn to the Lord. Who would not like to be forgiven? “It is God that justifieth.”

## Solicitude for Religion.

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“HIS HEART TREMBLED FOR THE ARK OF GOD.”—1 *Samuel* iv. 13.

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WELL might old Eli's heart tremble for the safety of the ark that his impious sons had rashly carried into the war with the Philistines. The heart of the aged man, at once Judge and High Priest, at last broke, because of the calamity that befel the ark, and he died. Taking the ark as a symbol of Religion we notice, I.—SOME REASONS WHY THE CAUSE OF RELIGION SHOULD BE VERY DEAR TO US, in other words, why we should care for the ark of God. (1) *Because the Cause of Religion ensures the chief elements in the welfare of men.* Eli was a patriot. He felt the loss of the ark would mean sorrow and shame to the *family*, the loss of glory to the *village*, the rushing, like sudden night, of ruin on the *nation*. So if our Religion go from us a weird Ichabod will be born; “Gone is the glory of England for the ark of God is taken.” (2) *Because the Cause of Religion is identified with the glory of God.* Worse than the tidings of the defeat of the nation or the death of his sons was the mention to Eli of the ark of God. As a creature in the work of the Creator, a loyal subject in the designs of his Sovereign, a filial child in the purposes of his father, a good man is interested in the religion God has given to man. How much God cares for religion—*i.e.*, the re-union of man and God—we may read in the heart of Christ. II.—SOME CONSIDERATIONS THAT SHOULD FILL US WITH ANXIETY ABOUT THE CAUSE OF RELIGION IN OUR MIDST, in other words, which shall make our hearts tremble for the ark of God. We may urgently inquire about religion in England, as Eli did about the ark, “What is there done, my son?” The reply will tell of (1) *Antagonism.* (a) Intellectual, (b) Moral. (2) *Neglect.* Recent census of church-goers reveals appalling indifferentism. (3) *Disloyalty.* III.—SOME OF THE WAYS IN WHICH WE MAY PROMOTE THE CAUSE OF RELIGION, in other words, do our part to ensure the safety and progress of the ark of God. (1) *Never conceal your belief in religion.* Opposition is blatant and noisy, shall not allegiance be distinct and pronounced. (2) *Uphold the Institutions and observe the Rites of Religion.* (3) *Diffuse its knowledge and extend its influence* by (a) Example, (b) Prayer, (c) Gifts, (d) Work. Old Eli, blind and feeble, sat by the wayside waiting for news of the ark, who of us will be content to be found in such a posture of feebleness and ignorance about the progress of religion?

EDITOR.

## Pulpit Handmaids.

### NATURAL HISTORY HOMILIES.

#### Leviticus xi. 13-19.

In our daily speech we often compare men to animals. To illustrate some trait in his character we call a man by the name of some beast of the field, or bird of the air which has, or is supposed to have, the quality we desire to ascribe to him. He is as surly as a bear, or as fierce as a wolf, or stubborn as a mule, or as cunning as a fox, or as treacherous as a cat, or as revengeful as a wasp, or he is, perhaps, as timid as a hare.

The Bible contains several examples of this kind of symbolism. Ephraim is "a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke." David's enemies are strong "bulls of Basban." When he would warn the disciples at Philippi against certain false teachers, Paul says:—"Beware of dogs." And our Lord himself, who knew so well what was in man, addressed certain Jews in these terms:—"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers."

Out of several fowls here pronounced unclean by the Levitical law I shall select a few, and will treat of them as *types of character*. I will not discuss the reasons adduced why these various animals were not allowed to be eaten by the Hebrews; but I would suggest, with many of the Commentators, that, perhaps, one reason why they were forbidden was that they had qualities which God wished His people to hold in abomination. He desired the chosen race to shun certain well-known characteristics of these birds. They were not to be Vulture-like, or Owl-like, or Bat-like. On this supposition I will treat of the subject, and may the Holy Spirit help us, so that, from this seemingly unpromising field, we may reap an abundance of wholesome and practical teaching.

#### VII.—THE PELICAN.

"And these ye shall have in abomination among the fowls; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: . . . the *Pelican*."—verses 13, 18.

The Pelican is one of the largest of the swimming birds; and is to be found in abundance everywhere, but in the more northerly latitudes. Under its bill there is a pouch, or bag, said to be capable of holding as much as twenty pints of water. This it stocks with fish, and retires to a lonely and distant spot in the wilderness to feast itself till there is need for a new supply of food. In feeding her young the female bird empties the contents of this pouch by pressing it against her breast,

an action which gave rise to the vulgar notion that she wounded herself to nourish her offspring with her own blood. The Hebrew name of the Pelican (*Kaath*) is supposed to be derived from a peculiar action in the taking of its food.

I.—To the Hebrews there was nothing about the Pelican more noticeable than its mode of feeding. Hence the name to which I have just alluded. THE CHIEF CHARACTERISTIC OF SOME PEOPLE IS, THAT THEY ARE ALWAYS AT HOME AT MEAL TIME. We call them gluttons, or gourmands; and in doing so have described the biggest part of their nature. Of these people we may say, "Their



god is their belly." "What shall we eat? and what shall we drink?" are the most interesting questions which engage their thoughts.

(1) *Do not suppose that Christianity is adverse to a pleasurable diet.* The culinary arts are not obnoxious to the spirit or law of Jesus Christ. On the other hand the Gospel makes the reasonable gratification of appetite a vehicle of praise to the Divine Being. Her motto is, "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Paul says to Timothy, "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." "I shall never be ashamed," said the pious Hervey, in reply to one who blamed him for speaking in one of his works of the exquisite relish of Turbot, and deliciousness of Salmon, on the ground that these were no proper delights for a Christian, "I shall never be ashamed to take a fish, a fowl, or a fruit into my hand, and say, 'A present this from our All-Bountiful Creator; see its beauty, taste its sweetness, admire its excellency; and

adore the Great Benefactor.' To us He has freely granted these and other delights, though He Himself, in the days of His flesh, had gall to eat, and vinegar to drink."

(2) *Gluttony and excess alone are intolerable to Christianity.* It demands temperance in all things. (See Luke xxi. 34; Phil. iv. 5.) And in so doing has a regard entirely to man's own comfort and welfare. (See Prov. xxv. 16.)

(3) A question has been engaging the earnest attention of physicians and others, particularly of late years. It is this, What kind and amount of diet is most fitted to promote health and strength? It has received a unanimous answer. *A moderate quantity of plain, but wholesome food is the best possible for the human system.* In times of depressed trade, when multitudes are out of employment and deprived of their usual luxuries, there is always a lower rate of mortality, and that even when, as in the winter of 1879 and the one following, in addition to trade depression, there is a visitation of the coldest and most severe weather. In the workhouse infirmaries the

longevity of the inmates is always very high, notwithstanding that these people come from the worst fed, and clothed, and housed class in the community.

(4) *Rich and luxurious diet, freely indulged in, will only do mischief.* Many of the ailments from which people suffer are directly caused no doubt, whether they will be convinced of it or not, by an overabundant and luxurious eating. The depraved taste for fine things, but indigestible, if not checked, will undermine the health and sap the strength of the very strongest men. Some commit suicide with the pistol or the rope, others with turtle-soup and cucumbers. (Prov. xxiii. 2, 3; Psalm lxxviii. 31; with Numbers xi. 33, 34).

II.—The female Pelican used to have the credit of wounding herself to feed her young. That, however, was an error to be dispelled by a more careful observation. THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO HAVE A REPUTATION FOR EXCELLENCIES THEY DO NOT POSSESS. They are not so good as they seem,—they have only the semblance of great virtues. A more intimate acquaintance with them will

dispel the delusion. For example,—a man is said to be *liberal*, when the fact is he knows nothing of self-sacrifice, never had a comfort the less by all his gifts. He gives out of his surplusage,—from what is left after he has gratified every whim; and, perhaps, he would not give at all, but for the name of the thing, or the advantage of it as a trade advertisement. Or a man is said to be *public-spirited and patriotic*, when he is only a self-seeker,—has no other thought or wish than to get into place or power, or to achieve for himself a name. Or, if known mostly in connection with Christian effort and enterprise,—if he is, say, a minister, or a preacher, his laboriousness and enthusiasm are regarded as having their root in love to God and for souls, when in truth the man never had a thought that went beyond his reputation or his stipend.

(1) If men are sometimes too hard on us,—if we do not get full credit for our actions, *are they not sometimes too lenient, too favourable in their judgment of our characters?* What shams must men sometimes feel themselves to be, when

listening to the adulations of their admirers! If it was given to many people to read their biographies, or to hear their funeral sermons, would they not be infinitely astonished at their goodness? I trow they would.

(2) We are told that *God looketh upon the heart*. There will be no mistakes in His judgment of men. Do not let any of us be satisfied with the world's estimate of our characters. We may deceive the world by appearances, but not God: He needeth not that any should testify of man; for He knoweth what is in man. "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things."

III.—The flight of the Pelican into the wilderness, to feast there on the contents of its well-stored bag, reminds me of PEOPLE WHO, HAVING MADE THEIR FORTUNES, RETIRE INTO PRIVATE LIFE TO ENJOY THE SAME, REGARDLESS OF THE OBLIGATIONS AND DUTIES INSEPARABLY CONNECTED WITH PROPERTY. They are a class to be found in most communities. Endowed with rare opportunities of doing good they yet spend their strength,

so far as the world is concerned, for "nought, and in vain." They have no higher purpose than their own enjoyment. If their money is perpetually flowing through their hands, giving the impression of vast generosity, the stream is entirely absorbed by their own selfishness. Others may receive benefit from their profusion, but that was not their intention. Benevolence is no part of their nature. Genuine kindness and love never influenced them to the bestowment of one favour. From the purposes of self-indulgence they can spare no fraction even of their abundance. Like the great Sahara, which absorbs to itself the rains of heaven, sending forth no streams to fertilise the surrounding regions, these drink up the copious showers of a gracious Providence, pouring nothing forth along the channels of benevolence opening to them on every side.

Thank God there are men—many of them who have made their fortunes and retired—of whom we can tell another story. *Some of the best and most honourable men in our communities are re-*

*tired merchants.* Selfishness! They have none of it. They enjoy the privileges or advantages of wealth—God meant that they should—but they also remember its duties. They regard themselves as God's stewards, and the money they receive, after deducting a conscionable amount for their own expenses, they scrupulously devote to the sacred purposes of charity and religion. They are in society like the orange-tree, or the rose-bush. Wherever you meet them you feel the air around you to be most sweet and delightful, and their manifold kindnesses make the world pleasanter to all who come in their way.

(1) Am I speaking of a class that is not represented in my audience, and to which none of you are likely ever to belong? Do not go away with the idea that my words, therefore, have no applicability to your case. The miserable selfishness I have described is as much to be avoided; and the noble generosity I have described is as much to be emulated, by you and me, involved in the business of the world and poor comparatively,

as by those with comfortable fortunes and relieved of the necessity of toil. Every man on whom God has bestowed worldly goods to any degree, occupies a position of trust in relation thereto; and these sketches should make us all inquire as to the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of our stewardship. "Charge them that are rich," &c. (1 Timothy vii. 17, 18). No applicability to our case? You and I should ask to-day, *are we greedily absorbing to ourselves the bounty of God, or are we generously giving a proportion of it,—a proportion fixed by conscience, under the guidance of God's Word, to alleviate the woes of men and to save their souls?*

(2) Perhaps some of us will find that the selfishness we were ready to condemn in others is conspicuous enough in our own characters. I doubt not that there are among you some good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Yet *I fear that selfishness rules in too many of your hearts, and that too many of you are strangers to kindly and generous impulses and actions.* You live



up to your income, and when you pass away none of God's poor shall miss a benefactor, and no institution or church shall be the weaker from your

loss. A mean, empty life! Sapless as the leaf in autumn, and no more to be had in remembrance than it!

BRISTOL. A. F. FORREST.

## ZOOLOGICAL PARABLES.

"GATHER UP THE FRAGMENTS."—*John vi. 12.*

### No. VI.—"The Sun in his Might."

IF any form of idolatry be excusable, it is the worship of the sun. We who have passed our lives in this English climate can form but little idea of the "Sun in his Might," as he appears to the inhabitants of the warmer zones.

There is a well-known story of a Parsee, who, on being charged with worshipping the sun, simply replied, "So would you if you had ever seen him." In default of the sun the Parsee will consistently turn to fire, which is, indeed, the gift of the sun, the fragment which has been gathered and stored from countless ages, so that nothing should be lost. Not that the Parsee believes the sun or the fire to be God. He looks upon them as visible representatives of an invisible Deity, and so addresses his worship to Him.

We, who possess a more spiritual faith than that of the Parsee, do not recognize the sun as a representative of God, but as the most potent of His visible agents, as far as our knowledge goes.

Putting aside, for the present, the different earths and their satellites which belong to the solar system, let us bestow a thought on what the sun does for this particular earth in which we live. Now-a-days we do not think that the sun was created for the sole purpose of lighting and warming this earth; and, indeed, it is scarcely correct to say that the sun gives out either light or heat. From the sun there is continually hurled an emanation whose extent is far beyond the powers of human imagination to conceive. This emanation is neither light nor

heat, but becomes manifested in either of these forms when it strikes upon a suitable medium.

That heat, as such, is not darted from the sun upon the earth is evident from the fact that, even in the tropics, the tops of the highest mountains are covered with perpetual snow, though the valley beneath, which is several thousands of feet further from the sun, is glowing with heat as well as rejoicing in light.

Those who have ascended by means of the balloon know, practically, that the higher they rise, *i. e.*, the nearer their approach to the sun, the colder do they feel. A very few minutes will transport the aerial voyager from almost unendurable heat into the severest frost.

The solar emanation requires an atmosphere as the medium against which it must strike, so as to be manifested as heat.

Neither is light, as such, darted from the sun. If, after sunset, we see the planets shining with light reflected from the sun, we cannot see the light on its way to the planet, but the Moon, or Jupiter, or Mars, are made visible because the solar emanation has struck upon them and become manifested as light.

Take the "gay motes that people the sunbeams," as a familiar example. They are simply the minute particles of dust which float in the air, and which become visible when the light strikes them. Hold a white-hot piece of iron in the sunbeam and the blackest imaginable clouds roll from it. The heat has consumed all the dust motes, and, therefore, the light has nothing to strike upon, and the result is darkness.

So the popular notion that the planets are cold or dark in proportion to their distance from the sun is evidently a mistaken idea, the light and heat which they receive depending, not upon their distance from the sun, but the character of their atmospheres.

Using conventional and popular terms, I wonder how many of us have tried to realize the amount of light and heat which is received daily by this earth, or have wondered what becomes of them both after the sun has set.

First, as to the heat.

On an ordinary summer's day, the ground on which the sunbeams fall becomes tolerably hot, though, as the heat is diffused,

we scarcely realize its power. Supposing that we gather the rays that fall into a two-inch circle, by means of a convex lens, and concentrate them into a point, we can kindle a fire with them. With a two-foot circle, the volume of heat is so great that iron is melted by it.

Hour after hour this heat is hurled upon the earth. Where does it go? Not one atom of it is wasted, but it is stored in various treasuries, and can be liberated by various means.

Take a small piece of metal and place it in a freezing mixture until it is many degrees below the freezing point. Now strike it two or three sharp blows with a hammer, and it will become hot enough to burn the hand. The heat that had been stored within it has been driven out by the blows. The same effect can be produced by rubbing two pieces of metal together.

Even ice itself contains a large amount of latent heat, which can be liberated and manifested as unmistakeably as that which was hidden in the metal.

When the savage "makes fire" by the friction of two pieces of wood, or when we produce sparks by striking flint and steel together, or by rubbing a match upon a rough surface, the heat is not produced by man, but is simply liberated from the objects in which it was hidden.

Take the coal by which we cook our food and warm our houses, whence comes the heat? It came, originally, from the sun, and aided in developing the tree which, in the course of uncalculated ages, was converted into coal, and formed a treasure-chamber for the garnered heat.

So it is with light. "How far that little candle throws its beams!" says Shakespeare. He did not know, as we know now, that the rays of light which are shed by the candle are only sunbeams which have been imprisoned, and are now set free. The electric light itself, on which our eyes cannot rest, is nothing but liberated sunbeams.

More than this, we now know, as an ascertained fact, that light, heat, electricity, galvanism, magnetism, and motive power, are identical, and mutually convertible; and the source of them all is "the Sun in his Might."

J. G. WOOD, M.A., F.L.S.

## Selected Acorns from Stalwart Oaks.

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“The smallest living *acorn* is fit to be the parent of *oak-trees* without end.”—*Carlyle*.

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IDEAS RATHER THAN WORDS.—“The *idea* that is the chief question of the living acorn you do not ask first, How large an acorn art thou? . . . You ask it first of all: Art thou a *living acorn*? not a dead mushroom, as the most are.”—*Carlyle* (Introduction to Emerson’s Essays).

WORK THAT ENDURES.—“I was perfectly aware that I was planting *acorns* while my contemporaries were setting kidney-beans; the *oak* will grow, though I may never sit under its shade, my children will.”—*Southey*.

HEART-DEEP TEACHING.—“Dipping and seasoning all your words and sentences in your heart, before they come into your mouth; truly affecting and cordially expressing all that you say, so that the auditors may plainly perceive every word is *heart-deep*.”—*G. Herbert*.

LAW.—“Of Law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world.”—*Hooker*.

WORDS EMPTY AND FULL.—“The world abounds with shallow words, mere empty sounds. The words in the general conversation of society and in the popular literature of the day, are empty shells without a kernel, mere husks without grain. But the words of inspired men are brimful—full of light and full of power.”—*David Thomas, D.D.*

THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE.—“God is not a lofty philosopher who reveals scientific truths to men in order that they may have a noble pleasure in contemplating and disseminating them; the search for these truths is a purely human labour. The Divine work is grander and more complicated, and is essentially practical.”—*Guizot*.

THE VALUE OF CHRISTIANITY.—“What I revere and obey in Christianity is its reality; its boundless charity, its deep interior life, the rest it gives to my mind, the echo it returns to my thoughts, the perfect accords it makes with my reason through all its representation of God and His Providence.”—*Emerson*.

PLEADING FOR GOD.—“I am a beggar of beggars and take pleasure in being so in order that you may be numbered among the beloved of God.”—*Augustine*.

T. BROUGHTON KNIGHT.



## Correspondence Page.

[*Enquiries or Answers will be inserted here concerning Books, or about Texts suitable for Special Occasions, or as to Sermons on given Verses or Topics. Brief letters on any matter that pertains to the work of the Gospel Preacher or Student will also be welcomed.*]

### ANSWERS.

#### DETAILS OF "GOOD SAMARITAN PARABLE."

##### *Second Answer.*

Before ventilating any airy imaginations on the above-named points in the parable of the good Samaritan, will it not be more profitable to consider whether or not it has any literal meaning? "Who is my neighbour?" The Jews had a very narrow idea of extending charity. Gentiles and Samaritans were excluded. The world's good Samaritan here indicates who is a true neighbour. It is he who never thinks of "name, nation, or creed," when acts of kindness are required. This individual duty must also be a national one; hence the nation calling itself a Christian nation has had enjoined upon it the duty of "taking care" of all who need assistance, no matter of what name, nation, colour, or creed they may be. This brings us to "THE INN." Israel-Britain is practically carrying into effect the lesson inculcated by the great Teacher, in answer to the question, Who is my neighbour? Its doors are ever open to the weary, the homeless, the sick, the destitute, and the dying. Here the persecuted find protection, the slave finds freedom, and the wanderer obtains rest. Let any needful, suffering one be brought to any door of this big house, he is taken in, and all that skill, care, or protection can do, may be relied upon. And in this wide world, so full of sorrow and suffering, there is only one such inn whose doors are ever open. "THE TWOPENCE" was the good Samaritan's payment for the work necessary to be done. "Take care of him." The innkeepers of Israel-Britain, from time to time, have taken care of millions, and they cannot but acknowledge that they have always had the "twopence" to go on with. The gradual increase in the size of the establishment is a proof of this. But, as it is in most large inns, there are some who think that they are not sufficiently rewarded for their trouble. For such there is THE PROMISE, "Whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee." Israel-Britain has undertaken a huge and an enormous work. Some so-called friends and supporters have predicted its ruin and collapse. But rest assured that the big house, with many chambers, will stand and prosper, until the world's good Samaritan returns, and then whatever is amiss will be set right; whatever is to pay will be paid to the full.

WEST HARTLEPOOL

J. T. GOTT.

### QUESTIONS.

BISHOP BUTLER'S USE OF THE WORD "PROBABILITY."

When Bishop Butler, in the "Analogy," asserts that "to us probability is the very guide of life," what are we to understand by "probability?" E. T.

## Reviews.

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THE CYCLOPÆDIA OF PRACTICAL QUOTATIONS, ENGLISH AND LATIN. By J. K. HOYT and ANNA WARD. London : R. D. Dickenson, Farrington Street.

There are tens of thousands of volumes in our libraries written by men of past ages, some of them amongst the most illustrious of the race in genius and learning, that are practically dead and buried to living men. The great thoughts they contain are practically lost. In this age volumes are so rapidly multiplying on every variety of subject, periodical literature so abounding, and the generation withal so busy, that very few have the disposition or the time to study our old authors. Well read, discriminating, and in every respect competent compilers who shall cull from the works both of ancient and modern authors their choicest things, and hand them down to us in the condensate form, are the men most needed now in literary departments of labour. Amongst the publishers who encourage such labours and employ such men, Mr. Dickenson is one of the most industrious and successful. He has produced several such works, this is decidedly one of the best. Although the title, perhaps, is too large—"Cyclopædia of Practical Quotations"—the book does contain something on nearly every subject. English and Latin quotations, proverbs and mottoes, Roman, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, &c. It also contains Law and Ecclesiastical Terms and Significations, the names, dates, and nationalities of Authors quoted; and most copious indices pointing to all the subjects. Truly a most valuable work is this to all public speakers and writers. It will, of course, have a very large circulation, but not larger than it deserves.

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THE GIRL'S OWN ANNUAL, Vol. III.

THE BOY'S OWN ANNUAL, Vol. IV.

London: Religious Tract Society, Paternoster Row.

Here are two very handsome volumes, one for boys and the other for girls, containing a rich variety both to enlighten, charm, and develope the young mind. They contain tales, biographies, travels, receipts for almost everything, culinary, millinery, medicine, facts in relation to almost every branch of science, poetry, music, with a host of illustrations, life-like, striking, and well executed. Whilst there is much that is intrinsically valuable and most attractive in these volumes, we should like to see brief and interestingly written articles to instruct boys and girls on their own natures, corporeal and mental, on the British constitution, on political economy, dealing with the rights and wrongs of the people. We should also like to see less prominence given to the glory of arms and to the attractions of birth and wealth, and to mere conventional theologies, and pietistic moods. Such training the young must have if the next generation is to consist of strong men and women, healthy minded, free from prejudice and cant, knowing their rights and the best methods of achieving them. Most heartily, however, do we appreciate these beautiful volumes, and trust they will find their way into the homes of thousands of our British families.

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AN OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARY FOR ENGLISH READERS, BY VARIOUS WRITERS, Edited by CHARLES JOHN ELLICOTT, D.D., Vol. I. London: Cassell, Petter and Galpin, Ludgate Hill.

The New Testament volumes of this Commentary, under the able editorship of Bishop Ellicott, have been noticed in the *Homilist* as they have appeared, and have been most heartily recommended to our clerical readers. This volume of the Old Testament (being the first of five) accords with them not only in type, paper, and general "get-up," which in every respect is admirable, but in the high character of its contents, its superior scholarship, and the class of readers to which it is especially addressed, viz., "English readers." One of the great objects of this Commentary is "to meet some of the deep needs of the present time, especially of that large

and increasing class of readers who are conscious that chilling doubts have crept into the soul, and that modern criticism has seemed to them to make it doubtful whether Scripture is what it claims to be, not merely a truthful record of God's dealings with man, but a power to make man wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. For these, and for such as these, it was stated that much that would be put forward in the notes, and especially the manner in which it would be put forward, would be found especially helpful. Difficulties would be fairly met, removed where they could be removed, left simply and frankly where it did not appear that God had yet vouchsafed to us the means of doing more than modifying them, or reducing their gravity and magnitude." The very first men in the ranks of Biblical scholarship are employed in this Commentary. We have such names as Dr. Payne Smith, Dr. Plumptre, Canon Farrar, Canon Barry, Canon Rawlinson, Canon Spence, Rev. A. Aglen, M.A., Dr. Deane, Canon Elliott, Rev. J. Ball, M.A., Dr. Ginsburg, Dr. Gardiner, Rev. A. Jennings, M.A., Rev. W. Lowe, M.A., Dr. Stanley Leathes, Rev. J. Nutt, M.A., Dr. Pope, Dr. Reynolds, Dr. Sinker, Dr. Salmon, Rev. C. H. Waller, M.A., Rev. S. Warren, M.A. The volume before us contains expositions of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. For many reasons, which we need not specify, this work will be the most valuable exposition of the Bible ever produced in this or in any other country. He who has this will need no other. There are very able introductions to each book. The general introduction from the able and accomplished Dean Plumptre is of very great worth alike in the breadth of its spirit, the thoroughness of its culture, and the devoutness of its tone.

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THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH. A NEW TRANSLATION WITH COMMENTARY AND INDICES. In Two Volumes. By REV. T. K. CHEYNE, M.A. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, & Co., Paternoster Square.

Ten years ago a work by the author was published by Macmillan, entitled, "The Book of Isaiah Chronologically Arranged." It contained an amended version, with historical and critical introduction and explanatory notes. This work is, to some extent, independent of that, and contains modified views on some of the critical questions. These two volumes contain a new translation which seems to us most faithful, and which, in consequence of its fresh phraseology, is not a little suggestive. The exegetical remarks indicate completeness of scholarship, extensive reading, and discriminative judgment. In addition to the new translation and valuable annotations, we have essays, extending over some 140 pages, illustrative of the commentary. These essays throw light on many obscure points, and present the book of Isaiah in many striking aspects. It is a most scholarly production and a rich contribution to Biblical exegesis.

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HERALDS OF THE CROSS, OR THE FULFILLING OF THE COMMAND. By F. ARNOLD FORSTER. London: Hatchards, Piccadilly.

After the preface and introduction to this book the following subjects are presented and discussed:—India—the Land and the People, Hindus and their Home, Carey's Difficulties and Successes, The Splendid City, Prisoners at Home, The Ingathering at Tinnevely, A Mission in the Mountains, The Story of Buddha, The Chinaman and his Country, Chinese Christians, The Land of the Rising Sun, Mahometanism, Followers of the Prophet, A Home in West Africa, The Land of Egypt, The Martyrs of Madagascar, Fifty Years of Missionary Work, The Islands of the South Seas, The Martyr Bishop, The Three Friends in Greenland, Indian Boys and Girls, On the Shores of the Pacific, The Golden Land, The Buried Seed, Fellow Helpers to the Truth, How Children can Help Missions. Although there is not much that is original in this book, as it is made up, for the most part, of extracts from other missionary works, it is a very interesting and valuable production. There are many incidents recorded that have all the interest of romance and much more. It is a capital volume to put into the hands of young people for whom enlarged hearts and intelligent faith is sought.

“OUR DARLINGS.” Edited by Dr. BARNARDO. London: J. Shaw & Co., Paternoster Row.

This is a most beautiful book for children, perhaps one of the best in the long catalogue provided for the young. It is crowded with incidents that must command their attention and engross their young sympathies. It is rich in pictorial illustrations. Every child who can read should have this volume put into its hand.

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THE FIRESIDE ANNUAL, FOR 1882.

HOME WORDS FOR HEART AND HEARTH, FOR 1882.

THE DAY OF DAYS ANNUAL, FOR 1882.

Conducted by Rev. CHARLES BULLOCK, B.D. London: 1, Paternoster Buildings.

Here are three annuals from the same publishing house and by the same able editor. “*The Fireside*” is as genial and as bright and charming as ever. Years do not dim it or cool its ardour. What a vast variety of articles it contains! Sketches of character, adventure, scenery, travel, life, vegetable, animal, and human. It has stories, poetry, and pictures in abundance. “*Home Words*,” too, is as interesting as ever. It has numerous sketches of popular clergymen, with admirable portraits, and not a few short but well-written and healthy stories. “*The Day of Days*” is of the same class, and deserves hearty recommendation. We congratulate the able and industrious editor on the production of such volumes as these every year, and trust that his valuable life will be prolonged for many years to carry on his very useful work.

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FOOTPRINTS. NATURE SEEN ON ITS HUMAN SIDE. By SARAH TYTLER. London: T. Fisher Unwin, Paternoster Row.

This is a peculiarly fascinating book. The subjects are:—“In the Sky, On the Clouds, On the Mountains, In the Plains and Across the Fields, Along the Rivers and Lochs, On the Sea and by the Shore, In Gardens among Homely Flowers, Among the Wild-Flowers, In the Woods, Among Birds, Among Domestic Animals and Pets, Among a few of the Wild Beasts and Living Creatures.” These are all treated in a way to arrest and sustain the interest of the reader. The book contains no less than 125 illustrations, some of which are very beautiful. We have no doubt this will secure, what it well deserves, a large circulation.

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FLOTSAM AND JETSAM. By T. GIBSON BOWLES. London: W. H. Allen & Co., 13, Waterloo Place.

The preface will present the readers with the character of this book and also give an idea of the author, who is evidently of extensive observation, who reflects deeply on what comes under his notice, burns with hatred of all shams and hypocrisies, and speaks out his mind somewhat quaintly, but with great force and fire. “I do not pretend to be a sailor—none but a sailor knows how much that word means—but I love the sea. From my boyhood (I once ran away to go to sea, but was captured and ignominiously brought back when well on my way to Liverpool) I have sought to learn sea-lore, and I have now learnt how little I know of it. But seafaring has become, and still is, to me a school, a consolation, and a refuge from the trivialities, the meannesses, and the confusions of land life. The grand, solemn, serious sea, so exacting and yet so loving, so remorseless yet so kindly, always reminds me—sometimes when I have well-nigh forgotten it—that there are real things in the world as well as unreal phrases, plain duties as well as doubtful opinions, proved methods as well as shifting speculations, philosophies, and policies. So it is that these writings rose. I did



not set out to make a book. I did think these thoughts, such as they are, and see these things, I simply set them down as they came home. They are not mere inventions, they are the expression of what was struck out of me in the conflict between the realities of the sea and the fancies of the shore. This is my only excuse for them." Take an extract as further illustrating the characteristics of the Author: "Professor Huxley is held to be a clever man, yet he palpably only cares to deal his words and has no notion of the responsibility a teacher incurs who gravely tosses them to the world as though they were realities. 'In the early part of the last century,' he says, 'society was in a state of corruption, bribery was the means of government and speculation was its reward. Four-fifths of the seats in the House of Commons were notoriously for sale in one shape or another,' and so forth. He then compares the present state of things which he declares to be 'in many obvious respects far better than that.' Surely a clever man standing up to say something ought to be able to say something better than this. If Professor Huxley really thinks that society is not now corrupt, it can only be because he does not know it, and because those who know it will not speak out in this generation. Bribery is not less than it was the means of government, the only difference is that the form of the bribery has changed, while the bribe itself has been made more magnificent, being nothing less than irresponsible power in England. Moreover, the chiefs have found means to keep the whole prize themselves, and instead of giving their followers money down, they pay them in promises. The rank and file, no doubt, now get nothing, or next to nothing, but if they are not bought it is only because they are not worth buying, being so easy to bamboozle. As to the seats in the House of Commons not being now for sale, if Professor Huxley will produce any incarnation of supreme wisdom—say himself—to any constituency and get him elected without money, or influence, or party—all which he it remembered involve sale in one shape or another—then I will cheerfully and thankfully agree with him."

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HANDBOOKS FOR BIBLE CLASSES; GENESIS, BY MARCUS DODS, D.D.  
THE REFORMATION, BY PROFESSOR LINDSAY, D.D. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

We have already called attention to several of the able and well got-up little books of this excellent series, and are glad to welcome these two.

Dr. Marcus Dods' hand-book on *Genesis* can scarcely receive too much praise. His introduction indicates his lofty and broad standpoint, as one or two sentences suffice to show: "It is a book of origins, but specially of the origin of all that has a bearing upon the kingdom of God upon earth . . . Much may be omitted that the archæologist seeks to know, but nothing is omitted that is requisite to the clear understanding of the origin of that people and kingdom whose history is the history of God's revelation of Himself." In this spirit Dr. Dods has prepared an exquisite manual to what is confessedly one of the least understood books of the Bible. He is thoroughly eclectic in the quotations from all schools of authors that are made contributory to his skilfully condensed footnotes to every passage. His own notes are worthy of their noble companionship. The questions suggested for use in class, at the end of each chapter, are admirably calculated not only to recal the information that has been imparted, but to awaken the genuine thinkings of the individual scholar.

Dr. Lindsay's book on *The Reformation* is a compendious and, probably, as far as any historian ever can be impartial, a very fair guide to the momentous epochs of the German, French, and English Reformations. His method is so clear and concise that very seldom has any two hundred pages contained so comprehensive a record of men and of times whose memory the world would not willingly let die. Those who remember Canon Kingsley's despair at ever obtaining accuracy in historic study, will, of course, always be on the alert to remember the bias of any historian whose leadership they are following. Though the bias here is in the direction of our own convictions, and is, perhaps, never allowed to make Dr. Lindsay unfair, it may not be ignored by the student of his capital text-book.



## *Leading Homily.*

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### WHISPERS OF THE SPRING.

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“SPEAK TO THE EARTH AND IT SHALL TEACH THEE.”—*Job* xii. 8.

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THE argument of the patriarch is based on the fact that the hand of God is to be traced everywhere in nature and in human life. The words of our text are a striking expression of the truth that—

I.—THE EARTH IS A MATERIAL SYMBOL OF SPIRITUAL IDEAS. This thought has ever been dear to spiritual minds. They have loved to trace in visible nature suggestions regarding the invisible. It was pre-eminently characteristic of the Hebrews that they associated God with all natural phenomena. Nature was to them but a thin veil, behind which Deity stood half revealed, half concealed. Seas, skies, forests, mountains, fields, were but parts of a mighty harp whose music breathed messages from the Eternal and Infinite. When Christ came He added intensity to this idea, by connecting God with all natural life, in its most commonplace as in its grandest manifestations. The flight of the sparrow was as much of God as the circling orbit of a world. And so the idea took possession of the Christian Church that nature and Scripture are but two pages of one Revelation—that in nature, though more faintly traced, we may discover the same great truths as in the Gospel. Thus Tertullian, in the 2nd century, writes in his “Apology” :—“Cast your eyes upon the

world and tell me whether anything is transacted, any commerce maintained without the resemblance of a Cross. The sea cannot be traversed without sails, and they are in this form. Nor is there any implement of labour which is not in the fashion of a Cross. Even man himself is distinguished by his uprightness and the extension of his arms." Should this early expression of a great truth be deemed fanciful, not such is the profound remark of Origen, in the 3rd century, which suggested to Bishop Butler the powerful argument of his "Analogy of Religion:"—"He who believes the Scriptures to have proceeded from Him who is the Author of nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it as are found in the constitution of nature."

It has, then, ever been a Christian belief that behind the material earth and its changing phenomena may be found spiritual meanings,—glimpses, revealings of Divine things. One of its latest expressions is in Keble's beautiful hymn:—

"There is a book who runs may read," &c.

II.—IT IS FOR US TO INTERPRET ITS SYMBOLISM AND FIND ITS HIDDEN MEANINGS. "Speak to the earth and it shall teach thee." Let us restrict our attention to lessons suggested by the returning Spring. What whisperings of hope, of trust, of joy, may the inner ear catch as we speak to the earth in this season of its recreation.

1.—*Speak and it will teach thee of its Author.* Just now we see everywhere the operation of a marvellous power. Through the brown earth new shoots of life are peeping. The woodland is lighted up with the soft gleam of the primrose. The grass is being renewed in its verdure. The trees, but a short time ago naked skeletons, are being clothed with soft and tender green. Within the gnarled oak and pillared elm the sap is moving up, making music as it goes. Everywhere life and beauty are manifesting themselves. We ask, How is all this change produced? What is the secret power at work thus so wondrously decking the earth with new glory? There is only one answer. You may find secondary causes to explain these phenomena. You may trace effect to cause back for innumerable steps, but at last you

are driven to the necessity of a Great First Cause, who is God,—the living will and active intelligence,—by Whom all things were created and are sustained. Says Luthardt, “Our reason, our instinct, our consciousness demand this. All things that surround us point from and beyond themselves; each is but a finger-post directing us onward past nature to the Supernatural.”

2.—*Speak to the earth, and it will teach thee of God's superabounding care for the lowliest forms of life.* Take the most common flower which Spring calls to life, and you will find it has been fashioned by the Master-hand, which leaves no room for improvement. Did you ever see anything more exquisite than the daisy, the common daisy of the fields, the gowan of Scotland, the “wee modest crimson-tippèd flower” sung by the Scottish poet? Poised on its slender stem, it is borne aloft to catch the dew and kiss the sunlight. From its heart, a globe of purest gold, stream forth its petals like rays of silver light. It lifts up its meek glory through the grass, and illumines the fields with a milky way of starry points. See its wonderful blending of colours: its dark green calyx, its rich gold centre, its milk-white leaves that tingle to the tips with sweet life, and blush into crimson like the rising blood in a maiden's face. Coming in early Spring, it stands between Winter and Summer, and blends in itself the beauties of both,—its leaves white like snow, yet touched with the fires of Summer. And, as if it lived but for the sun and in the sun—its great foster-father—when the sun goes down it folds its glories up and goes to sleep. Beautiful flower! one wonders not that in olden times it was the symbol of fidelity, that to-day it is the delight of childhood, and that in many languages the poet has made it the theme of song! Yet all this exquisite workmanship, all this lavish profusion of skill and care bestowed on a flower so common that every field and every wayside are its home! a flower so evanescent that in a few days it withers and dies!

And this is only an instance of what is universal throughout nature. The lowliest forms are shaped with the same care and adorned with the same profusion that belong to the mightiest creations of God. I regard this fact as singularly analogous to what we may call the central truth of the Gospel—God's care for



the individual man. The great aim of the Saviour's life was to rescue the fallen, to uplift the lowly, to give honour to the despised and down-trodden. Woe to them who despised His little ones! "I came not," He says, "to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

3.—*Speak to the earth, and it will teach thee that God means our human life to be bright and joyous.* In the garden of Eden, the first home of man, there were four kinds of trees which are a parable of God's provision for our many-sided nature. 1st: Trees good for food. God has stored the earth with everything needful for the body. All physical wants are provided for. 2nd: The tree of life, to eat of which bestowed immortality. Is not that tree still growing in our midst? This is life eternal, to know, to love, to serve Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ. 3rd: The tree of knowledge of good and evil. And this tree stands to-day before every child of man in the moral discipline and Divine restrictions placed on us. To disobey God's ordinances is to pluck the forbidden fruit and come to know bitterly and shamefully both good and evil. 4th: But besides all these there were in the Garden trees pleasant to the sight. Yes! God recognises our innate sense of beauty, the imagination, the heart, with its chambers of imagery, and He makes appeal to this sense in the loveliness with which this Spring season adorns the earth. Be not afraid of joy and brightness in life; they are no foes of a true spirituality. Gloom, moroseness, asceticism are not so near the Christian ideal as warmth, cheerfulness, and gladness, which brighten your own spirit and infect all round you with your joy.

4.—*Speak to the earth and it will teach thee lessons of hopefulness.* There is no season which awakens hope so powerfully as the Spring-time.

(a) It whispers a message of hope *for the mourner*. When all nature is waking from her long winter sleep, we see everywhere parables of the resurrection of the dead. What is this Spring-tide but nature's resurrection morning? The seed buried in the soil and left to corruption; behold! it is to-day rising a glorified body from its grave. "That which thou sowest is not quickened

except it die." "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption," &c. Behold! all nature in this Spring-time is bearing witness to the transcendent truth which Christ declared by the grave of Lazarus,—“I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” Take comfort, who mourn loved ones fallen asleep in Christ. The grave holds their mortal part as the earth keeps the seed, that it may rise glorified and transfigured—a spiritual body radiant with heaven’s light and strong with immortality.

(b) Spring whispers a message of hope *for all who have been defeated in life’s conflict*. We see a hint in this season that a *new start in life is possible*. Even loss may prove gain, and defeat be changed to victory, as Spring turns the decay of former Autumns into nourishment for present life. Men may rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things. Your defeats in the past may prepare for conquests in the future. A new Spring-time may come in your life as it does in nature.

(c) It whispers a message of hope *for all who seek the world’s improvement*. He who labours for the spiritual and moral advancement of his fellows must needs have faith and patience. What sore trials are his! What long delays before results appear! What apparently aimless and fruitless toils! Assuredly he needs the grace of patient faith and hope. But what encouragement may he derive from the budding life and new beauty of the Spring season. Whence come these glories of flower and leaf, of form and colour? They come from seeds sown and roots buried in the ground; from seeds that have lain through days of drought and nights of frost; from germs that but for experience we should have thought had perished, so long had they remained unfruitful. Even so, teachers of the young and preachers of the Word; even so, mothers who train your children in the nurture of the Lord; even so, men who seek to guide the opinions of your fellows and lead them to nobler conceptions of life and duty; even so, all who strive for the world’s advancement—be patient and hopeful. Your labours are as seed dropped in the mind of youth and age. Your words are germs that will

spring up another day. Your thoughts are roots of principle that will bear fair flowers of noble living by and by. Be not discouraged because now your labours seem barren of results. Every winter will change to Spring.

### III.—SPEAK THEN TO THE EARTH.

1.—*Hold frequent communion with nature.* Such a habit expands the mind and refines the feelings.

2.—*Bring to the study of nature a spiritual heart.* The “dry light of reason” is not enough if you would hear the subtlest whispers of nature’s voice. She has suggestions of things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart of man conceived. To walk by the “dry light of reason,” and shut the inner eyes of the spiritual man, is to be deliberately ignorant of much which nature has to teach.

3.—*Connect, as Christ did, all nature with God.* He is its centre and all-pervading Spirit. Without the Divine idea nature is a harp from which the strings have been taken, a riddle to which there is no answer, a mystery without possibility of solution.

CATERHAM VALLEY.

JAMES LEGGE, M.A.

THE CURSE AND SIN.—The curse in life comes from sin. If there had been no sin there would have been no curse. That curse will depart when sin is eradicated and removed. If we would escape it, let us, through grace, lay aside and get free from sin. The more holy, the less sorrow. The lapidary ceases to cut the diamond when it has a perfect surface. The sculptor ceases to carve the marble when it assumes the perfect form. The refiner extinguishes the fire when the gold reflects his image. The vine-dresser ceases to cut and prune the vine when it gives certain promise of rich clusters. The surgeon ceases to probe the wound when it shows signs of healthy healing. God ceases to send chastisement to the saint when the soul is purged from sin. Lay aside sin if thou wouldst escape chastisement. This is true of individuals, of families, and of nations.

TAUNTON.

J. MARSDEN, B.A.

# Homiletical Commentary.

## HOMILETIC SKETCHES ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

### A Natural and a Perverse Development of the Human Mind.

"Praise ye the Lord.

Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise in the congregation of saints.

Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him:

Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.

Let them praise His name in the dance:

Let them sing praises unto Him with the timbrel and harp.

For the Lord taketh pleasure in His people:

He will beautify the meek with salvation.

Let the saints be joyful in glory:

Let them sing aloud upon their beds.

Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand;

To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people;

To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron;

To execute upon them the judgment written:

This honour have all His saints. Praise ye the Lord."—*Psalm cxlix. 1-9.*

HISTORY.—The note struck at the close of the preceding psalm is in this poem re-echoed. Both the date and author are unknown.

ANNOTATIONS: Ver. 1.—"*Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise in the congregation of saints.*"

"See Ps. xxxiii. 3. The period of the restoration, an event which stirred the deepest emotions of the nation, was one \*though, perhaps, the least remarkable

of the epochs of the revival of the lyric poetry of the Hebrews. The word '*saints*' is one of the connecting links with the preceding psalm. The word occurs three times here. The harps which had been long hung upon the willows of Babylon were once more employed in the liturgical worship of the rebuilt temple."—*Canon Cook.*

Ver. 2.—"*Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in*



*their King.*" "Made him."

That is, made him a nation, not only in his restoration to Egypt, but in his restoration from Babylonian captivity.

Ver. 3.—"*Let them praise His name in the dance: let them sing praises unto Him with the timbrel and harp.*" The sacred dance—see Exodus xv. 20; Judges xi. 34; Jer. xxxi. 34; Ps. xxx. 11.

Ver. 4.—"*For the Lord taketh pleasure in His people: He will beautify the meek with salvation.*" "He beautifies the oppressed with salvation." The help which God vouchsafes to His oppressed people, against their oppressors, is not merely manifested to the world as deliverance and salvation generally, but serves also as an ornament and honour to that people themselves, so that coming forth arrayed in it they gain for it recognition and praise (see Isaiah lv. 5; lx. 7).—*Dr. MacCurdy.*

Ver. 5.—"*Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.*" "This stands in contrast to the previous lamentation (Hosea vii. 14) and weeping (Psalm vi. 7) in longings after a better time."—*Hengstenberg.*

Verses 6-9.—"*Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the*

*heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all His saints. Praise ye the Lord.*" "The Psalmist looks forward to the future exaltation of Israel; he sees them going forth to victory with the praises of God in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hand. (Comp. 2 Macc. xv. 27) 'So that fighting with their hands and praying unto God with their hearts they slew no less than thirty and five thousand men.' It is possible that the Jews after the captivity expected that they might once more be the instruments in God's hands for the destruction of His enemies; and many in Christian times we know, taking such verses as these as their watchword, have armed themselves or others for the fight, and considered that they were doing battle for the Lord. It was by this means that Caspar Scioppius, in his 'Clarion of the Sacred War,' a work written, it has been said, not with ink but with blood, roused and inflamed the Roman Catholic princes to the Thirty Years' War. It was by means of this psalm that in the German Protestant Community Thomas Münzer fanned

the flames of the War of the Peasants.”—*Young*.

ARGUMENT.—The first part of this psalm contains an exhortation to Israel to praise Jehovah the King and Creator with a new

song (verses 1-5). The second part passes into a triumphant expression of joy at the means afforded for the execution of judgments upon the heathen and their princes (verses 6-9).

HOMILETICS.—In this psalm we discover a *natural* and a *perverse* development of the human mind.

I.—Here is a NATURAL development of the human mind. The natural development is here seen in two circumstances—

First: *An enthusiastic desire to win all to the praises of the object of our chief affection.* Though we do not maintain that all the men who composed the various psalms possessed a supreme affection for the All-Good, we assume, for the sake of argument, that the author of this psalm was, anyhow, at this time, inspired by that affection. God seems to have been the All-in-All to his heart when he wrote this and the preceding psalm. This being so, this affection runs in the natural order of mind, viz.: an intense desire to win all to an adoration of the object loved. In the preceding psalm he calls on all nature to unite with him in praise; the sun, the moon, the stars, the heavens, &c., as well as the angels. In the same strain he continues in this composition. “*Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song and His praise in the congregation of saints. Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him: let the Children of Zion be joyful in their King.*” To wish others to praise the object that we love most with a *true* love is a law of mind as universal and irrevocable as any law of nature. We say *true* love, for there is a thing called love—the amatory sentiment—that would monopolise its object, and that burns with jealousy at any display of it toward others. Thus true religious love has an enthusiastic desire that all in the heavens above and the earth beneath, should join in adoring the One Supreme Object of worship. The deep and constant cry of all genuinely devout souls is, “O come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.” The natural development of mind is here seen in—

Secondly: *The raptures springing from true love.* Listen to

the language. "*Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him: let the children of Israel be joyful in their King. Let them praise His name in the dance, let them sing praises unto Him with the timbrel and harp.*" All this is expressive of the ecstasy of joy. Holy love is happiness, there is no real joyousness without it, it is the music of the heart, it is the sunshine of life, it is the Paradise of the soul, more, it is the happiness of the Great God Himself. Because He is love, He is the ever blessed God.

How great is Thy love, pure essence of Thee,  
Which angels above feel deeper than we,  
They glow in its sunshine, its wonders they see,  
They adore as Divine all love as from Thee;  
O love, the one sun! O love, the one sea!  
No life has begun that breathes not in Thee.  
Thy rays have no limit, Thy waves have no shore,  
Thou givest without merit to worlds evermore.  
O God, may Thy love from sin set us free,  
And bear us above to glory with Thee;  
Then, ever and ever, whilst ages shall run,  
We float on its river, we'll bask in its sun.

II.—Here is a PERVERSE development of the human mind. Revenge is an unnatural development, and here it is. "*Let the high praises of God be in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hand: to execute vengeance upon the heathen and punishments upon the people: to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron: to execute upon them the judgment written.*" Observe, the author considers the wreaking of vengeance as—

First: A joyous work. "*Let the saints be joyful in glory, let them sing aloud on their beds.*" "Revenge is sweet," it has been said. Perhaps so; for the moment there might be a momentary gratification in any wicked passion. But that momentary gratification soon turns into a fierce element of misery: "Revenge, at first though sweet, bitter ere long on itself recoils." The author considers the wreaking of vengeance as—

Secondly: A religious work. "*Let the high praises of God be in their mouth.*" Alas! so morally perverted are human souls that men have ever cherished the foulest passions and perpetrated

the greatest enormities under a perverted religious feeling. The author considers the wreaking of vengeance as—

Thirdly: An *honourable* work. “*This honour hath all His saints.*” To strike down a man, for a supposed insult, in a duel, or to cast a nation into bloody war, the million fools of every age have considered *honourable*. Honourable, indeed! Infernally abominable.

But our point is that revenge is a perverse development of mind; it is not a normal, but an abnormal passion; not a human, but a Satanic fire. It is a perversion of mind (1) Because it is *immoral*. It is a perversion of the sense of justice. Justice requires that we should render to every man his due, and that we should do unto others what we would have others do to us. There are men, alas! professed expositors of this holy book, who defend such vindictive utterances as these, and which are so frequently found in the psalms. Sometimes they defend them on the ground of the remote age in which the authors lived. This is a baseless defence, utterly unworthy of a moral philosopher, for is not the standard of moral character the same in every age and land? And is not that standard revealed to every man's conscience? “Why of yourselves judge ye not what is right?” Do we not find the same moral principles in the Old Testament as in the New? Do not the principles propounded in the Book of Job answer to the grand Sermon on the Mount? Do they not gleam forth, too, in Confucianism and Hindooism? What is morally wrong in one time and place is morally wrong in all times and places. Sometimes such utterances are defended on the ground that the authors speak as the representatives of God. This, to me, seems an impious assumption. No, revenge is God's.

“Speak not of vengeance! 'Tis the right of God.

Vengeance is His! Who will usurp the bolt

And launch it for Omnipotence? Shall man

Assume the right of judgment; or prescribe

How far the line of mercy shall extend,

Or punishment shall stretch its iron rod?

In thine own cause to judge who gave thee right,

Presumptuous man?”



Revenge is a perversion of mind (2) Because it is *unwise*. The mind is formed to be ruled by reason, to discover and to apply the best means for ends, but revenge seeks an end which it cannot achieve, viz., the destruction of its foe. On the assumption that the body is not the man but his mere temporary dwelling-place, and that there is a life to come, the enemy is not destroyed when you shoot him down, nor is his animosity quenched. He lives, and his anger perhaps burns toward you, may, perchance, return in eternity with interest your revenge. Moreover, the passion of vengeance works greater injury on its author than on its victim. It can only strike the *body* of its victim down, but brings unknown tortures into the *mind* of its author. A distinguished psychologist has said that he who cherishes a malign passion towards an enemy gives his enemy an advantage over him, and inflicts a greater injury upon himself than he could by any possibility inflict upon the object of his hate. Revenge is one of hell's tormenting fiends. "Hath any wronged thee," says Quarles, "be bravely revenged. Slight it, and the work has begun; forgive it, and it is finished." Revenge is a perversion of mind—

(3) Because it is *un-Christly*. Christ is the Ideal. Man is so constituted that he craves for such an ideal, and when he sees it he is bound to acknowledge it as such, he can conceive of nothing morally higher. But this Ideal of excellence of character is not only absolutely free from every particle of the malign, but glows and beams with love and love only, and with love in its highest form, viz.: that of forgiving love. In His teaching Christ denounced resentment and inculcated evermore the return of good for evil. What He taught He embodied in life, and, suspended in agony on the Cross and surrounded by His enemies, He breathed out with His last breath the prayer, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

"Have you never felt the pleasure of forgiving fraud or wrong,  
 Rippling through your soul like measure sweet of sweetest poet's song?  
 Have you never felt that beauty lies in pain for others borne?  
 That the sacredness of duty bids you offer love for scorn?  
 'Tis the Christian, not the Stoic, that best triumphs over pain."

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

## HOMILETIC SKETCH ON THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

## The Honest Sceptic.\*

"BUT THOMAS, ONE OF THE TWELVE, CALLED DIDYMUS, WAS NOT WITH THEM WHEN JESUS CAME. THE OTHER DISCIPLES THEREFORE SAID UNTO HIM, WE HAVE SEEN THE LORD. BUT HE SAID UNTO THEM, EXCEPT I SHALL SEE IN HIS HANDS THE PRINT OF THE NAILS, AND PUT MY FINGER INTO THE PRINT OF THE NAILS, AND THRUST MY HAND INTO HIS SIDE, I WILL NOT BELIEVE. AND AFTER EIGHT DAYS AGAIN HIS DISCIPLES WERE WITHIN, AND THOMAS WITH THEM: THEN CAME JESUS, THE DOORS BEING SHUT, AND STOOD IN THE MIDST, AND SAID, PEACE BE UNTO YOU. THEN SAITH HE TO THOMAS, REACH HITHER THY FINGER, AND BEHOLD MY HANDS; AND REACH HITHER THY HAND, AND THRUST IT INTO MY SIDE: AND BE NOT FAITHLESS BUT BELIEVING. AND THOMAS ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO HIM, MY LORD AND MY GOD. JESUS SAITH UNTO HIM, THOMAS, BECAUSE THOU HAST SEEN ME, THOU HAST BELIEVED; BLESSED ARE THEY THAT HAVE NOT SEEN, AND YET HAVE BELIEVED."—*John* xx. 24-29.

EXPOSITION: Ver. 24.—"*But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus.*" Both words mean twin. The Jews often had two names, one in Hebrew, the other in Greek or Latin. Thomas is the Jewish, and Didymus the foreign appellation. "*Was not with them when Jesus came.*" Why he was not at that meeting we are not told. Did the crucifixion destroy all his faith, or did the panic of the crucifixion drive him too far off to be present?

Ver. 25: "*The other disciples therefore said unto him, we have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand*

*into His side, I will not believe.*"

He rejects entirely the testimony of the disciples, and demands the testimony of his own senses. This is at once unjust and unreasonable. Yet this seems to be in accord with his mental habit. We find in chapter xiv., when our Lord referred to His departure, Thomas says, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, how can we know the way?" "*I will not believe,*" which means I will by no means believe.

Ver. 26: "*And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them.*" We are not to suppose from this that they had not met in the interval, but this meeting was special, it was on the Lord's day. "*Then*

\* See *Homilist*, vol. viii., page 537.

came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, *Peace be unto you.*" He again entered preternaturally, and He salutes them as before.

Ver. 27: "*Then saith He to Thomas.*" He knew Thomas's state of mind, and specially ad-

resses Himself to him, condescending to present him with the kind of evidence he required.

Ver. 28: "*And Thomas answered and said unto Him, my Lord and my God.*" A confession of resuscitated and re-invigorated faith.

HOMILETICS.—This fragment of evangelical history presents to us—

I.—AN INTERESTING RELIGIOUS SCEPTIC. "*But he said unto them, Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.*" Observe—

First: His scepticism was *negative* not *positive*. He did not deny the fact, nor question the veracity of his brethren, nor pronounce the thing impossible; all he says is, I cannot believe it without further evidence.

Secondly: His scepticism was *intellectual* not *moral*. "The wish is often father to the thought," and the ordinary scepticism of mankind originates in the wish. There is no evidence that Thomas wished the fact of Christ's resurrection to be untrue, but otherwise. He loved Christ. On one occasion he said, "Let us go with Him and die with Him."

Thirdly: His scepticism was *candid* not *clandestine*. He declares it to the very face of the men who announce the fact.

Fourthly. His scepticism was *convincible* not *obstinate*. He attended the very next meeting in order to gain the evidence he required. Here is—

II.—AN EXEMPLARY RELIGIOUS GUIDE. How did Christ treat this sceptic? Did He denounce him, or ignore him? No, He finds him out, speaks to him with exquisite tenderness, and condescends to give him the very evidence he required,—"*Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing.*" Observe (1) the promptitude, (2) the speciality, (3) the exquisite considerateness, and (4) the moral success of His treatment of this sceptic. Christ won him. "*Thomas answered, My Lord and my God.*" It was not the touch of Christ's wounded

hands and side that wrought the conviction and won the sceptic. It was that almighty spirit of love that sounded in the tones, that gleamed in the looks, and shone around Him as a halo, that did the work. Here is—

### III.—A SUPER-EMINENT RELIGIOUS FAITH. Observe—

First: It is possible for those who have never seen Christ to believe in Him. "*Have not seen, and yet have believed.*" The testimony of competent witnesses, the congruity of the Gospel with man's spiritual nature and condition, are quite sufficient to produce this faith. Hence thousands of men who have never seen Christ after the flesh have believed in Him and are doing so. "Whom having not seen we love," &c. It is implied—

Secondly: That those who believe in Him without seeing Him are peculiarly blest. "*Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.*" (1) Faith without sight is more *praiseworthy* than faith with sight. The one is a matter of necessity, men are bound to believe in what they see. The other is a matter of choice. It involves the discovery and the study of right kind of evidence. (2) Faith without sight is more *accurate* than faith by sight. The senses are proverbially deceptive. "Things are not what they seem." Human reason is constantly exposing and correcting the mistakes of the senses. (3) Faith without sight is more *enriching* than faith by sight. The man who believes only in what he sees, has a very poor and a very narrow world. How different the world of Newton to that of a country lout! (4) Faith without sight is more *invigorating* than faith by sight. The faith of the senses does not strengthen the soul. Faith in the unseen does this. So long as the disciples had Christ within the range of their senses how morally weak they were. Peter denied Him, &c. But when their Master withdrew from their vision and they began to reflect and pray, how heroic they became. On the day of Pentecost, the man whose faith had been shaken by the breath of a silly maid, stood up before assembled thousands of Christ's enemies and charged them with their crime.

CONCLUSION.—Do not denounce honest scepticism, nor treat it either with superciliousness or indifference. Do not regard the first disciples as being more privileged than yourself. You can



believe without seeing, and this is the highest kind of faith. Do not regard the witnesses of Christ's resurrection as too weak minded, prepossessed, and credulous to have required evidence. Thomas says, "*Except I thrust my hand into His side I will not believe.*" Do not fail to display special brotherly interest in an honest sceptic. He is a far more interesting character than a traditional believer. He is a living spirit, the other is a mental fossil. Traditional faith is far more obstructive to the spread of the Gospel than earnest doubt. "Faith," says Moore,—

"Fanatic faith once wedded fast  
To some dear falsehood,  
Hugs it fast."

"There lives," says Tennyson, "more faith in honest doubt, believe me, than in half the creeds."

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

THE TRUE PAROCHIAL SYSTEM.—John Sterling, giving his ideal of Church work, writes: "Now let us bear this in mind and consider how St. Paul would be likely to act if placed in another age than his own, and confined to one small division of country, in short, if he were in the situation of a modern parish priest. Is it not plain that he would substitute for his former wide excursions, the greatest possible intensity of influence in detail? It would be no longer from Jerusalem to Damascus, to Arabia, to Derbe, Lystra, Ephesus, Philippi, Athens, Corinth, Rome, that he would travel, but each house would be to him what each of these great cities was, a place where he would bring his whole being, and spend his heart for the conversion, purification, elevation of those under his influence. The whole man would be for ever at work for this purpose—head, heart, knowledge, time, body, possessions—all would be directed to this end, and except so far as other duties, namely, those to a family interferes, to this end alone. And if Paul would have done this, each of us ought to do so. Of course none of us is a Paul, but we may be perfectly like him in will, however meaner and weaker in faculties. The iris in the dewdrop is just as true and perfect an iris as the bow that measures the heavens and betokens the safety of the world from deluge."

## NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

### The Word of Truth.

James i. 19-21.—“WHEREFORE, MY BELOVED BRETHREN, LET EVERY MAN BE SWIFT TO HEAR, SLOW TO SPEAK, SLOW TO WRATH : FOR THE WRATH OF MAN WORKETH NOT THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. WHEREFORE LAY APART ALL FILTHINESS AND SUPERFLUITY OF NAUGHTINESS, AND RECEIVE WITH MEEKNESS THE ENGRAFTED WORD, WHICH IS ABLE TO SAVE YOUR SOULS.”

THE subject of this paragraph is the Word of Truth, by the instrumentality of which, as the apostle has just been telling his readers, they had been regenerated and saved. Men are saved by the belief of the truth ; it is the truth which makes wise unto salvation ; it is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ which, shining in upon the soul of man, scatters all the darkness ; it is in God’s light he sees light. The truth, as it is in Jesus, is the one instrument of the salvation of men. It is by the believing reception of it that men are renewed in the spirit of their minds ; it is by the continuous reception of it that they grow in grace,—growing in grace as in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ ; it is by this word abiding in them richly that they come to the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus.

These things being so, it is surely incumbent on every man to provide every facility for, to remove every obstruction in the way of, the ready reception of the Word of Truth ; or to express it in Scriptural phrase, to let it have free course and to be glorified. If the Bible be all that it professes to be, if the ordinance of preaching be all we believe it to be, then whatever hinders the success of these must surely be promptly and wholly put out of the way.

Now there are three things which in especial the apostle regards as great obstructions : *first*, a disinclination to hear the

Word of Truth; *second*, a proneness to pronounce upon the Word of Truth without having duly attended to it; *Three obstructions.* and *third*, a spirit of partizanship which identifies its own views of the Word of Truth with the Word of Truth itself. These obstructions were very prevalent and very hurtful in the early Churches, as we may see from what obtained in the Church of Corinth for example, where everyone was so eager to speak that he had not time to hear, and where the rancour of religious controversy wrought such havoc in the fair fields of Christian feeling and affection. In the same form and to the same extent, perhaps, these obstructions do not meet us in the Church to-day. But is there not enough of the disinclination on the part of very many to listen to Gospel teaching, of the eagerness to speak ere they have learned, and of that bitterness which can be infused into religious controversy where men identify their own views of Divine Truth with the Divine Truth itself. Is there not enough of all this among us to justify us in saying that the apostle was writing for our day, as well as for his own, when he said, "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

There are many things of which it cannot be said that we ought to be swift to hear them. Many things which we ought not to hear at all, which we ought to shut the ears against altogether; things which, if we hear, do us moral and spiritual injury, which remain in us festering, polluting, and corrupting the very springs of life, inflicting upon us irreparable moral damage. There are, indeed, some things we cannot help hearing, some sights we cannot help seeing. Social life is not yet so cleansed by the spirit of purity as not to obtrude even much that is only evil, prejudicial to moral life. But there are some things we *could help hearing*, some books we could help reading, evil influences we could keep from hurting us, if we would but resolutely set ourselves against them. There are entertainments, amusements, books, which no Christian man should lower himself to the level of taking part in, of hearing or reading with even the faintest approbation.

The influence of them is evil; and I am very much mistaken if the desire just to see what is going on, unless it be most carefully guarded by religious motive, will be able to keep one altogether uncontaminated by the evil within the circle of which he has voluntarily brought himself. A man cannot touch pitch and not be defiled, he cannot put his hand into the fire and not be burned, and it behoves the young especially to lay to heart the warning exhortation of the Saviour, "Take heed what ye hear"; and which is the same thing, Take heed what ye read.

No such warning needs be given in regard to the hearing of the Word of God; on the other hand all urgency is to be used in exhorting to the hearing and reading of this. We are to be ready at every opportunity; eager to take the advantage of every ordinance for the better understanding of the Word of God; we are to be swift to hear the Word of Truth. When we remember that it is in proportion as a Christian man imbibes Christian truth, as he is permeated by Christian principle, as he lives by the bread which cometh down from heaven, as the Word of God dwells in him richly, that he can manifest the Christian life among men and grow up into the likeness of Jesus Christ, we shall the more clearly see the necessity for the solemn and earnest exhortation of the apostle, "Let every man be swift to hear." And shall we not at the same time see cause to wonder at, and to mourn over, the so prevalent disinclination on the part of so many, of whom better things might be expected, to hear the Word of God? If all church-going people were as often in the church, as without any great effort they could be, would there be such a general feeling of despondency about this very matter, and would there be any need for those spasmodic and abortive efforts to make the services more attractive—that is to say more sensational? If men, as of old, pressed to hear the Word of God, would not all the churches be fuller than they are, and would not the work, as well as the Word of God, have free course and be glorified?

In these days, when books are multiplied, and when there are Bibles for almost everybody if they were able to read them, it might be supposed that the language of the apostle should be



made to stand thus, Let every man be swift *to read* the Word of God ; with the result that reading would, for the most part, take the place of hearing, especially as in addition there are so many learned and popular commentaries on every page of Scripture accessible to all. It is true ; and pity it is that so few such helps to the Bible are brought into requisition by many who could so well afford them ; by those, for example, by whom it is thought a useless kind of luxury to have anything more than a concordance, while they regard it as but the barest necessity that they should have complete sets of the works of the popular authors of the day. This is true ; and pity 'tis 'tis true. For all this, it was by the inspiration of the Spirit that James used the word, "Be swift to hear" ; and it was from the profound insight into the needs of man that he was inspired to use it. He who knew what was in man sent His disciples to preach the Gospel. It was by the ordinance of preaching that in the early days of Christianity the heathen world was persuaded out of its heathenism into the faith which is in Christ Jesus ; and it is by the ordinance of preaching that the world is to be persuaded to come to Jesus until the end of time.

There are two main elements in preaching, and these two elements will always be desired and demanded by Christian men and women who are in earnest in their love to the Gospel. The first is truth, Divine truth, the truth as it is in Jesus, the knowledge that makes wise unto salvation, the revelation of God's will as it lies legibly inscribed on the page of Scripture. And the second is, this truth conveyed through the personality of the speaker, saturated with the intellectual and spiritual experiences of the speaker, and made over to the hearer with all the force of conviction, and with all the persuasiveness of sympathy. There must be the truth, Gospel truth, saving truth ; that is the very foundation, the fundamental condition, the pre-supposition of preaching. He is no ambassador of God who does not come in God's name with God's message of grace,—“to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself.” But along with this there is need—so is the constitution of man, thereby only can he be reached—

The two main  
elements of  
Gospel  
Preaching.

there is need that there be the ambassador, that this truth come through the heart and from the lips of a man of like passions with himself. The apostle here supposes the continued existence of the order of the ministry; not as an institution, as some would misrepresent it, imposed upon reluctant human nature, which as soon as it became enlightened enough it would be eager to throw off, but as a provision made for its deepest needs; the need that when the truth is brought to him it shall be brought by one who, himself, has felt its power; by one who has entered into the lot of those he would like to see sharing the same spiritual blessings with himself; who knows what sore temptations are, for that he has felt the same, and who can, therefore, *commend* the Gospel of the grace of God. The more firmly the Gospel takes hold of men's hearts, the more widespread will be the demand for Gospel preaching. Preach the Gospel; sinners need it and saints like it; it is the Word of Truth which is able to save the soul; it is the power of God unto salvation; it is the bread of life by which we are nourished unto everlasting life. "Wherefore let every man be swift to hear."

"Word of the ever-living God, will of His glorious Son!  
Without thee how could earth be trod, or heaven itself be won?  
Lord, grant us all aright to learn the wisdom it imparts,  
And to its heavenly teaching turn, with simple, child-like hearts."

"Swift to hear," and "slow to speak"; the one is the counterpart of the other. Let the hearing of the word bulk more largely in your esteem and in your practice than the expressing of your judgments upon it. Take a long time to get at right views of truth, and even when you think you have attained to these look all round them before you give them currency among men, lest, perhaps, you mistakenly send that abroad among them which can only harm, or even corrupt and destroy. It would seem to

be reasonable that a man should well inform himself upon any matter before he sets himself forth as a master and teacher of it; that he should lay his foundations deep and wide in the secrets of his own

The  
Preparation  
for  
Preaching.

intellectual and moral being before he builds a structure upon it

which the eyes of all men may behold ; that if he would lead the thoughts of his fellow-men he should first of all have carefully noted what this leading would lead to. Chiefest of all does this hold true of the matter of the Word of God ; and the wonder is, it presses itself upon one the longer he contemplates it, the wonder is that those who have to speak about the things of God do not more frequently experience the despondency of the prophet of old when he said, "I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name." The subject is so vast, its issues are so far-reaching, the possible influences acting on so many different minds are so infinite, that the wonder would seem to be that there should be so many who, led indeed by other and as solemn considerations, should yet break the silence and plead with their fellow-men to hear what the Lord is seeking to say to their souls. If it were not for those higher considerations, for the conviction that it is infinitely precious truth they have to tell, and for their reliance on Him, without whose aid all their speaking is in vain, they would relapse into silence, glad to be allowed to take their place in the school of the learners, "swift to hear." The immediate reference of the apostle here is to the kind of thing of which the Corinthian Church again gives us a specimen, where many of the church members in their assemblies were so anxious to air their gifts of tongues, so taken up with the fact that they could speak, as to be oblivious to the other fact that they had not anything worth speaking, oblivious to this most important fact for them that if they would but sit still, there were others among them who had that to say which it would do them incalculable good to hear. But, no, the exercise of their gift was too great a temptation, and Paul had to write sharply to them and, in fact, read them this very plain lesson before he could get them to be "slow to speak,"—"If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace." What the Church of Christ might have been spared, in crude speculation, in immature exposition, in unsettling interpretations of the Divine Word, if men had been more ready to hear than to speak, more ready to mature and test their opinions than to rush before the Church with them ! Many a bulky volume would never have

seen the light, and many a bitter controversy would never have weakened the energies of the Church and caused the bystanders to let fly at her the scorn-tipped arrow—"Is this the city that men call the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth?"

Observe the sequence of the apostle's thought: "swift to hear" the Word of God, "slow to speak" or pronounce judgments upon the Word of God, slow to wrathful discussions and controversies about the Word of God, slow to mingle angry and bitter feelings with what should be carefully kept far apart from the loud and jarring sounds of human passion. There must be, it would not be good for us if there were not, religious discussions and controversies; they clear the air, they let us see where we stand, they mark the progress men are making in clearer conceptions of

**Religious** Bible truth, in firmer grasp and wider compre-  
**Controversy.** hension of Scriptural principle, in more clear-sighted discrimination between the essentials and non-essentials of religion, between what enters into the substance of the faith and what lies outside. But why should not all this go on without anger and wrath and bitterness and recrimination? Why should not the spirit of peace preside over and permeate these discussions all through, so that religious controversy instead of being a by-word might become but another form of arriving at the meaning of the truth; another means of proclaiming with power? It is good always to be zealously affected in a good thing, and zeal is always accompanied by the evolving of a good deal of latent heat, and if men were indifferent to the fate of the truth, one way or the other, they would not get into any heat about it; but the danger here is that men are so prone to identify their own views of the truth with the truth itself, so prone to be so sure that their position and truth's position are one and the same, that when anyone opposes them he is thought to be opposing the truth, is regarded as a personal enemy because he is opposing the truth, till, in place of there being a discussion about truth, there is only a wrangling controversy disfigured by personalities and the imputation of unworthy motives. When a man is perfectly sure that his own view of the Divine will is identical with the Divine will, and that when he is zealously contending for his



own interpretation of the truth, it is the absolute truth itself he is contending for. That man needs a double portion of the Spirit to prevent him from identifying those who oppose him with the enemies of the truth; from letting his zeal be corrupted into zealotry; from persecuting or despitefully using those whom he regards as traitors to the faith. What said the Saviour, laying His finger upon this very evil thing in the hearts of the unconverted Jews, "They will put you out of the synagogues: Yea the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service?"—Saul, their persecutor, for example, the religious controversialist of that age who, far from being slow to wrath was exceedingly mad against all who differed from his reading and interpretation of the law and the prophets. You do not get any of this from Paul the apostle, who is grieved at the heart on account of the contentions of the Churches, and who himself was gentle among them, even as a nurse cherisheth her children, calling them to witness how holily and justly and unblameably he and the others associated with him had behaved themselves among them. The apostle of works agrees with the apostle of faith. He directs his exhortations against this very delusion. The wrath of man can never work out, either in himself or in the man it is directed against, the righteousness of God, the righteousness that God requires and that God approves. It is something very different that man's wrath works out; it is unrighteousness, it is injustice, it is degradation and corruption, the end of these things is death. "Be ye angry and sin not." "Grieve not the Spirit of God." "Put away anger, wrath, malice." "Put on kindness, meekness, long-suffering: forbearing one another and forgiving one another if any man have a quarrel of any kind against any: above all, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness, and let the peace of God rule in your hearts to the which also ye are called."

**Hear the conclusion of the whole matter.** "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." What remains but just to get rid of all this filthiness of the spirit, this superabundance of malice, and, in a very different

spirit from that whose workings have just been exposed, in meekness, humility, teachableness, to receive this word of truth, this implanted word which is able to save the soul, and which is able to save the soul from all this evil which those who are not "swift to hear," but who are swift to speak and swift to wrath incur. Which is able to save you from anger and wrath and everything that makes a man unlike Jesus Christ, who when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. It is the teaching of the apostle that if he will but take in, receive, believe, in a meek spirit, like that of our Saviour's, the word of truth, we shall be just in the same proportion preserved from the disfigurements and degradations, from the explosions and the wild resentments of the spirit of anger and wrath. For though His words in their connection bear principally on wrathful controversy in religion, they have a far wider reference. They refer to that spirit which all to a greater or less extent possess, and which all, more or less, to their own after remorse, very often express. "Slow to speak," and "slow to wrath" they go together, and blessed is that man in whom they together dwell. "If I had just held my peace; if I had just not taken offence as I did; if I had waited for an explanation of what was said; if I had not been so ready to impute motives; if I had not allowed myself to brood over what, after all, was perhaps not meant to be a slight; if I had crushed down the angry feeling when it was beginning to rise; if I had been more watchful over my temper; if I had listened to the promptings of my better nature to forget it; if I had listened to the merciful caution 'let not the sun go down upon your wrath.'" Not a very pleasant conversation that for a man to hold within himself. Yet it is not an uncommon one, and for once we have wished we had spoken, we have twenty times wished we had held our peace, and for once we have been righteously angry; how often has it been the wrath that worketh not the righteousness of God? When men let anger get the better of them, when they are full of wrath, they are given over for the time to delusions: they do not see things as they are,

**Communings.**

the most innocent thing is misconstrued, the most simple action is supposed to be full of sinister meaning, everything is seen through the foul mists that rise up from the upturned, tempest-tossed ocean of their being, as is shown by the fact that when the fit of anger is over they see how wrong they have been, how

**The Divine** unjust, how far from working out the righteousness  
**Remedy.** of God. How is this to be remedied, how is it to be destroyed? "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting"; but by prayer and fasting and the word it will come out. Wherefore, let the Word of God dwell in us richly; in meekness let us receive "the engrafted word which is able to save our souls."

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

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#### DIVINE SERVICE.

"'Do justice and judgment.' That's your Bible order; that's the 'Service of God,' not praying nor psalm-singing. You are told, indeed, to sing psalms when you are merry, and to pray when you need anything; and by the perversion of the evil spirit we get to think that praying and psalm-singing are 'service.' If a child finds itself in want of anything, it runs and asks its father for it—does it call that doing its father a service? When a child loves its father very much, and is very happy, it may sing little songs about him; but it doesn't call that serving its father. And yet we are impudent enough to call our beggings and chantings 'Divine Service.' We say, 'Divine Service will be performed at eleven o'clock.' Alas! unless we perform Divine service in every willing act of life, we never perform it at all."—*Ruskin*.

## Germs of Thought.

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### God's Lamb.

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“BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF  
THE WORLD.”—*John i. 29.*

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A GREAT diversity of opinion prevails amongst Biblical expositors as to the meaning, scope, and application of this unique and impressive passage. A brief glance at some of those opinions may not be unprofitable. Some suppose that John here alludes to and takes his figure from the Paschal Lamb that was slain in Egypt, to commemorate the passing over of the dwellings of the Israelites by the angel of death, when all the first-born of the Egyptians were destroyed. Against this supposition the objection is raised that the slaying of the Paschal Lamb had no relation to, or connection with, the taking away of sin—that *it* was a memorial of protection or “passing over.” Let us turn to the account given, read it carefully through, and form our own judgment upon it. “And the Lord spake,” &c.—*Exodus xii. 1-14.*

Others suppose that John here alludes to and takes his figure from the Lamb that was offered at the morning and evening sacrifice. Against this supposition the same objection is raised that the offering of that Lamb had no relation to, or connection with, the taking away of sin. That the morning Lamb was a meat-offering, and the evening a drink-offering. Whereas the sin-offering was always a bull or a goat. Let us turn to the account of its institution, read it carefully through, and form our own judgment upon it also. “And the Lord spake unto Moses,” &c.—*Numbers xxviii. 1-10.*

Then, others suppose that John here alludes to and takes his figure from the language of the prophet Isaiah, in chap. liii, and that he sums up the meaning of that chapter in this verse. Let us turn to it also and read it carefully through. “Who hath believed,” &c.—*Isaiah liii.* In favour of this view it has been argued that if we take vv. 6, 7 together, we have just the designation and



sin-bearing character here ascribed to Christ by John. It is argued further that Isaiah was John's favourite prophet, as he quotes from him again and again in his testimony, and that having just before (v. 23) appropriated to *himself* the designation of "*the voice*" of which Isaiah speaks in chap. xl., he now gives to Jesus the designation of "*the Lamb*" of which he speaks in the chapter referred to, as though he had said, "Yesterday I told you that *I* am Isaiah's *voice*, to-day I can tell you that *He* is Isaiah's *Lamb*."

As these are only the opinions of men, and of men having an equal claim upon us for their goodness, learning, and sincerity, we must use our own judgment as to the view we accept. For my own part, I am inclined to take a wider view than either, or perhaps I should say, one embracing the whole. I think that John here alludes to the pure and innocent character of Christ, as well as to His sacrificial and sin-removing work. Many of the Jews were shepherds, the lamb was their constant companion, they were well acquainted with its nature and habits, and to them it was the emblem of spotless innocence and holy gentleness, as well as one of the animals which they were required to offer daily in sacrifice. I need not remind you with what soft radiance these virtues shone in the character and life of our Saviour, "He was holy," &c. I think, then, that John used the term "Lamb," for all that "Lambhood" could possibly signify to the mind of the Jew. He had seen the Spirit descend, like a dove, on Jesus, at His baptism, and connecting this with His sacrificial work for the world's sin, he would now use a designation that would embrace and symbolize all he knew concerning Him.

"The Lamb of God." *God's Lamb*. There is one element of tender endearment in this expression which we cannot put into words, *God's Lamb*. I wish we had more heart so that we could get into the heart of this spiritual gospel. In a few verses back we have—"the only begotten Son"—"the bosom"—"of the Father," all heart terms, all words of endearment, and now we have the "*Lamb of God*." Shall we analyze these beautiful, sublime, fragrant, tender words and phrases in which there are depths of mystery, heights of grandeur, lengths of affection,

breadths of emotion that pass all human knowledge, that we may theorize upon them? It would be like the child picking the beautiful rose to pieces to discover and to explain the secret of its beauty and fragrance. Perhaps there are times in all our lives when we take delight in that kind of employment. But as we grow older we shrink from it. "The Lamb of God!" I could fall down and worship before it. I could meditate upon it with feelings of unutterable ecstasy until all the chords of my being vibrate and blend into a full diapason of song. It carries me right up to the heart of God. It encircles the life and person of the Saviour with a halo of Divine tenderness and loving sacredness. My whole nature melts and yet glows with thrilling rapture as I utter it. "Behold the Lamb of God."

"Which taketh away the sin of the world." A great diversity of opinion prevails, too, as to the meaning, scope, and application of these words. Here, also, I would much rather give myself up to, and lose myself in the contemplation of the grand, wondrous, mighty fact here ascribed to God's Lamb, than analyze it. Note: "Who taketh away the sin of the world." What an idea to grasp; what a work to comprehend; what a fact to compass! But just connect the two members of the verse, "Behold God's Lamb, who taketh away the sin of the world." Do you not feel inclined to stand and worship before such stupendous sentences? To attempt to analyze and to explain them, I feel to be like being placed before that grand majestic sun and told to analyze and to explain it. You catch just a glimpse of its magnitude and glory, but before you can seize it, so as to put it into words, it goes from you. The mind staggers in the contemplation of the amazing work here ascribed to God's Lamb. We may, however, just mark the three principal words here employed.

"Sin." Who can compass in thought all that the word "sin" involves—sin in all its roots, fruits, influences, consequences? What a colossal giant to grapple with! *God's* antagonist.

"The world." Of course this means those who live upon it. Who ever thought of attacking for its destruction the world's sin? Who ever thought of taking such a stupendous burden

upon his shoulders as the burden of the world's sin? Carry your thoughts back over the centuries past, let them wander through the present, project them forward and down the vista of the future, and try to gather up into one tremendous thought *the world's sin*. That is the work Christ has set Himself to accomplish—to take away that.

“Taketh away.” The word here translated, “taketh away,” or, as the margin suggests, “beareth away,” means to take up, to lift, to raise, to carry, to take away, to remove, to destroy, to kill. Some expositors say that it expresses the notion of expiation. Against this view it is objected that the word is never used in connection with sacrifice, that it does not mean to take one's self or to bear one's self, but to remove, destroy, &c. It is a more general word than the one used to express to offer sacrifice. It is further objected, that if John meant expiation, he would have used the term for “punishment” as well, and that he would have exclaimed, “Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away—beareth the punishment of the sin of the world.” Also, that the verb expresses continuous action, something that Christ is always doing, and not simply anything He has done. A continuous and not a completed act. These are points on which great, and good, and learned men differ. Thank God we are not saved by *any* philosophy of the Atonement, or by *any* theory of the death of Christ, but by Christ Himself. All agree that “This is a faithful saying,” &c. It is when they begin to explain how, that they begin to differ. You and I can say, “Behold God's Lamb, who taketh away the world's sin.” But if you or I begin to explain how, we should begin to debate and to controvert. So I should give to this passage the widest possible signification. Is expiation, atonement, propitiation necessary? It is here. Do you want pardon, reconciliation, purification, nobility of character, holiness of life? It is all here. It means ten thousand times more than ever entered the puny heart of man to conceive, than the most comprehensive creed ever embraced. Whatever may be required on the part of God, or on the part of man, for the taking away of the world's sin, has been provided in and by God's Lamb.

"God's Lamb." What an apparent contradiction. One would have thought that for such a stupendous work we should have need of God's lion—mighty one—champion. No; it is going to be done by God's Lamb. It is love, not wrath, heart, not intellect, affection, not compulsion, that is going to convert—take away the world's sin.

POPLAR.

BENJAMIN PREECE.

### Christ's Resurrection.

"NOW IS CHRIST RISEN FROM THE DEAD, AND BECOME THE FIRST-FRUIITS OF THEM THAT SLEPT."—1 Cor. xv. 20.

I.—OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD IS THE PLEDGE AND EARNEST OF ALL CHRISTIAN HOPE.

1. *That the resurrection of Christ should be the corner stone of Christian doctrine strikes at the root of all religious theories which ignore the miraculous in Christianity.* The story of Christ begins and closes with the supernatural—the incarnation and the resurrection.

2. *The resurrection is constantly represented in Scripture as the supreme fact in Christianity.*

(a) *Christ often foretells it as such.* Ten times, at least, is it introduced by Him. Matt. xvii. 9; Mark viii. 31; Luke ix. 22; Matt. xii. 40; John ii. 19, xi. 25; &c., &c. He thus committed Himself to a test by which His claims in all their extent might be proved, or the reverse. If He did not rise, men would know that He was a self-deceiver, if not an impostor. As the Holy Son of God He could not remain in the power of death, which is a penalty for sin. As such, moreover, He might give Himself up to death for a time, to secure a great end in the economy of salvation, but He must have life, indestructible, in Himself—must rise.

(b) *The apostles made it the supreme fact in their preaching.* "They preached the resurrection"—Acts iv. 2. See also Acts



i. 22, iv. 33, xxiii. 6; Rom. iv. 1, vi. 5; Phil. iii. 10; 1 Pet. i. 3, iii. 21.

3. *The resurrection was established by evidence which admitted no question in the mind of St. Paul, long the bitter opponent of Christianity.* See 1 Cor. xv. 5-8.

II.—WHY SO MUCH STRESS IS LAID ON THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

1. *It was the confirmation of all His promises as the Founder of a new religion.*

(a) Had He lain in the grave the proof to which He appealed, of being sent to save men, would have been wanting.

(b) His resurrection was a confirmation of His claims by the Eternal Father. Of His claims to be an atoning sacrifice for sin. Of His being, in reality, the Son of God. "Declared to be the Son of God, with power, by the resurrection from the dead." Of His having entered into His glory at the head of the new spiritual kingdom He had founded.

(c) In the presence of His resurrection all doubts vanish from the minds of the apostles as to His being able to save to the uttermost all who come to God through Him. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. xv. 17). But there is no fear since He is risen. "Who is he that condemneth: it is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again." "If Christ be not risen our preaching is vain: your faith, also, is vain" (1 Cor. xv. 14). "They that have fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (1 Cor. xv. 18). "We are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. xv. 19).

(d) But, now that He is risen, all is bright with a glorious hope. "He was raised for our justification." "He has sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high, having obtained eternal redemption for us." "We have an Advocate with the Father." "He has entered into heaven, to appear in the presence of God for us." "He ever liveth to make intercession for us."

2. *The resurrection of Christ was the pledge of our own resurrection and future happiness.* "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." The words spoken over the tomb of Lazarus come back with awful power

from the heavens now Christ is risen—"I am the resurrection and the life." Those, also, spoken to His disciples—"Because I live ye shall live also."

In Him humanity conquered death. The destiny of man linked with Him. He is the first-fruits. The first golden ear of the sure coming harvest. The streamer that heralds the day. The bud of spring that foretells the glory of June.

He has thus brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. The contrast between the darkness of the future before Christ and its holy radiance since. Cæsar demanding that Cataline should be spared since death ended existence. Cicero bewailing his daughter's death without a ray of hope beyond earth.

Christ's resurrection has "begotten us again to a lively hope." It has attracted us to the eternal world as the home of our Elder Brother.

"I go your entrance to secure,  
And an abode prepare;  
Regions unknown are safe to you,  
Since I, your friend, am there."

3. *The resurrection of Christ is the constraining impulse to a holy life.*

(a) To be like Christ the ideal of His followers, since He showed us the path by which alone we can gain a happy immortality. Gratitude and love to One so transcendently glorious, and yet our incarnate and crucified Lord, draws out the heart to an absolute devotion to His service,—that service being a holy life. As He has risen, so we are constrained to seek a spiritual resurrection from our old selves to newness of life, to be like Him and, hereafter, rejoin Him.

(b) His resurrection has secured us heavenly grace to assist us on this course. "I will send the Comforter." "Jesus being by the right hand of God exalted hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Pentecost). "It is expedient for you that I go away"—to send the Spirit. Through Him we now have the mighty help of the Divine Spirit.

(c) The resurrection of Christ is a pledge of the future triumph of His kingdom. "All power given Him in heaven and on earth." He is now "King of kings and Lord of lords." "He must reign." "God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name," &c. "He is Head over all things to the Church." "Christ has both died and risen, and lives again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living."

LONDON.

CUNNINGHAM GEIKIE, D.D.

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### Real Religion.

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"BE THOU IN THE FEAR OF THE LORD ALL THE DAY LONG."—  
*Proverbs xxiii. 17.*

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#### I.—The principle of the text EXPOUNDED.

The "Fear of the Lord" is the Old Testament synonym for real religion, and is a phrase not devoid of impressiveness and grandeur. The recognition of the "Lord" Jehovah inspires a "fear" which fills the breast with reverential awe, and operates (1) *Practically* both as a restraint from evil and as a positive motive to excellence and holiness; and (2) *Comprehensively*, including *all times*—every day, and all the hours of every-day life; and, therefore, inferentially, *all things*, small as well as great. Hence living to God in everything and always. Such consecration is possible only where the inner nature has been Divinely reached. It implies the surrender of self, heartily and unreservedly. It means a new creature—regeneration.

II.—The principle of the text SUSTAINED against erroneous and restrictive notions.

1. *That religion is a thing of times and seasons*—of Sabbaths, solemnities, &c. Such observances are right and necessary. But why restrict its expression to the *direct* acknowledgment of God? and why endorse the superstitious distinction between the "religious" and the "secular"? and why seek to make life hemispheric—half, or less than half, light, and the rest dark? By physical necessity the sun thus treats the earth. But God can

enwrap the whole of life with His presence, and enrich and gladden it with glory. Religion cannot live if restricted. It is all or nothing. The breath and the pulse cannot be stopped without loss of life. The idea that it can is an error, and results in mechanical punctiliousness and lifeless formalism. Therefore, "Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long."

2. *That we cannot be conscious of religion all the day long.* That we could not if we tried; and that, in justice to our secular work, we ought not to try. But a force may be operative of which we are not conscious; as, *e.g.*, the heaving lung and the throbbing heart; the spirit of dutiful obedience in the life of the child, and the love for wife and family which sends forth the bread-winner to his daily task. "Do all" in the name of the Lord Jesus. "Whether ye eat or drink," &c. It is an error to restrict religion to the sphere of consciousness. "Be thou," &c.

3. *That religion is mainly a matter of feeling*, and that feelings are, by their very nature, transient. This is an error that leads to the cultivation of "frames" and "experiences," and makes religion fitful and ever craving excitement. Now let the emotions be reached and swayed, for a thing is poor that is heartless: but it still remains true that the emotions form but one part of man's complex being, the whole of which should be pervaded by the fear of the Lord. Besides, emotions give place to principle; and principle grows into habit; and thus religion comes to be uniform in its action and universal in its sweep, like the mighty power of gravitation which, ceaselessly operative, holds together "all the day long," tiny snow-flake and towering Alp, revolving orb and stupendous system.

III.—The principle ENFORCED. Difficult of attainment, we are apt to fall below it, and need the word of stimulus and appeal. Note, then, that the fulfilment of the text is—

1. *Possible.* Scripture requires it. Noble exemplifications abound: David, Daniel, Nehemiah, &c. Modern life. Supremely the pattern history of the Lord Jesus.

2. *Obligational.* "The Lord," this supplies the *basis* of the duty. He claims not a part of man or life, but the whole. "All the day" is His. "All the day" He is near us and is doing us



good. Hence, all the day long be thou in His fear, whether in work or worship, recreation or rest, trial or joy.

3. *Advantageous.* For self, it means safety, strength, and happiness. Toward others, it means influence and power for good. For life, it means making the very best of it we can. For death, preparedness. It may come any day, any part of the day; therefore, all the day long be thou in the fear of the Lord.

BRISTOL.

J. P. ALLEN, M.A.

### An Address for a Church Meeting.

“THEY SHALL WALK WITH ME IN WHITE.”—*Rev. iii. 4.*

THESE words are part of the epistle which our Saviour, by His apostle John, addressed to the Church at Sardis. How full of instruction are these epistles to the seven Churches; with what advantage may they be studied by Christians now. How adapted to the wants of the Church in all ages.

They suggest two general reflections—

\* 1. *That Christ takes an interest in Churches as Churches.* He regards not merely individual Christians, but Christians as united together, as associated in Churches. Christ knows intimately every Church, He knows its condition. He knows whether a Church is advancing or declining; He knows whether it is accomplishing the great purpose for which Churches are formed, He knows what it is doing for the extension of His kingdom, for the promotion of His glory.

It is an interesting thought, also, that Jesus is intimately acquainted with *our* Church; everything connected with it He knows; He knows every individual member, He knows if our Church is in a satisfactory state, He knows if we are adorning our Christian profession, if we are living up to our privileges. Let us seek that the Church of which we are members should be a holy, useful, praying Church, such a Church as Jesus will look upon with approval.

2. *That Jesus Christ is intimately acquainted with each indi-*

*vidual member of every Church.* He knows the degree in which we each love Him, the degree in which we each desire to serve Him. He knows, too, if we are above or below the average of our Church's piety. There may be some Churches which, taken as a whole, are in a very unsatisfactory state; they may be cold, formal, worldly, almost useless, and yet, even in such Churches, Jesus may see some who are living up to their profession, who in very unfavourable circumstances are adorning the doctrine of God their Saviour, who are living to His glory, leading useful, holy lives. Even in Sardis He had some who had not defiled their garments. Then, again, in other Churches which, taken as a whole, are in a healthy state, composed mainly of holy, humble, praying, useful Christians, He sees some who dishonour their profession, who ought never to have been in the Church, some who are trying to serve two masters, who are unfaithful, unprofitable servants.

Let us now, for a short time direct our thoughts to the words especially selected for our meditation.

"They shall walk with Me in white." These words describe the blessedness which awaits in another world those members of the Church in Sardis who had not defiled their garments. But they are equally appropriate as describing the future of every real Christian. Of all such, Jesus says, "They shall walk with Me in white." These words suggest three thoughts—

I.—THE FUTURE BLESSEDNESS OF THE CHRISTIAN WILL CONSIST IN BEING WITH CHRIST. Heaven would possess no charms for His disciples if Jesus was not there. It is His presence that gives to Heaven its glory and its blessedness. You will be familiar with the numerous passages of Scripture that connect the blessedness of Heaven with the presence of Christ, they are very precious to the Christian; these are a few:—"In My Father's house are many mansions," &c.—*John* xiv. 2, 3; "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory."—*John* xvii. 24; "If children then heirs," &c.—*Romans* viii. 17; Paul says: "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better."—*Phill.* i. 23; "Then we which

are alive and remain," &c.—1 *Thess.* 4. 17. To be with Christ was the inspiring hope, the longing desire of the apostle Paul, amidst his many and heavy trials he was supported by the thought that soon he should be "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." How full of consolation and hope to the Christian, as he approaches the close of life, is the thought that he will soon meet his Saviour, that he will soon enter His blessed presence; to how many dying beds has this thought brought joy and comfort.

II.—THE FUTURE BLESSEDNESS OF THE CHRISTIAN WILL CONSIST IN WALKING WITH CHRIST. This refers to the relationship which the Christian will sustain to our Saviour, he will be with Him not simply as a disciple, not as a servant, but he will walk with Him as a friend. While there will ever be an infinite difference between Christ and His people—one the Creator, the other the creature—yet He will hold familiar intercourse with them. While in this world, under the most favourable circumstances, the Christian can enjoy the presence of his Saviour only at intervals, the world with its duties and employments often necessarily engage his thoughts. But in Heaven there will be no distractions, nothing to prevent constant intercourse and communion with his Saviour, he will there see Him as He is, face to face, and, having once entered His presence, will go no more out for ever.

III.—THE FUTURE BLESSEDNESS OF THE CHRISTIAN WILL CONSIST IN WALKING WITH JESUS IN WHITE.

(1) White robes have, in all ages, been the emblem of joy, worn on festive occasions, emblematical of the perfect joy of Heaven. There will be no sorrow in Heaven, no tears in Heaven, no partings in Heaven, no mourning will be worn in Heaven.

(2) White robes are emblematical of victory. They were worn in ancient times by the conqueror returning in triumph. In Heaven the Christian's warfare will be over, he will have no more foes to resist, no more enemies to conquer.

(3) White robes are emblematical of purity. In Heaven the Christian will be free from all defilements, from all sin.

How urgent is the inquiry, have we all reason to hope that we shall walk with Jesus in white?

STOKE BISHOP.

AN OLD DEACON.

# Seedlings.

## Days of the Christian Year.

John xx. 21.

(First Sunday after Easter.)

"THEN SAID JESUS TO THEM AGAIN, PEACE BE UNTO YOU: AS MY FATHER HATH SENT ME, EVEN SO SEND I YOU."

It is doubtful whether our Lord had in His mind any thought of connecting His salutation with His commission, but we may be allowed to notice—

I.—THAT INWARD HARMONY IS AN ESSENTIAL CONDITION OF OUTWARD EFFORT. It is needful that Christ should speak "Peace" to our souls if we are to go forth on any mission of usefulness. They who have not "returned unto their rest" in God, who have not come back from the far country of sin to the Divine Father and found abiding peace in His home of love and righteousness, are utterly unfitted to go out into the world of spiritual unrest with a message of joy and hope on their lips. On the other hand, all they who have known the inward trouble which comes with consciousness of sin, and who have entered into the rest which comes with faith in an Almighty Saviour, are in a spiritual position to extend a healing, help-

ing, restoring hand to all guilty and sorrowing men. But the prominent lesson in our Lord's words is—

II.—THAT OUR WORK IN THE WORLD IS VERY SIMILAR TO OUR SAVIOUR'S. As the Father sent the Son, so He sends us into the world. There are, indeed, *some points of contrast* between our Lord and ourselves in His mission and our own. (1) He laid the foundation; we help to build the superstructure. His work constitutes the ground on which alone we can build. (2) He supplied us with all the materials which we use—His life, His truth, His sufferings, His death. These are the means we employ to carry out our purpose. (3) He deliberately devoted Himself to death, knowing that the sacrifice of Calvary would be the source and spring of spiritual power; we go forward, not unprepared to suffer or even to die at our post, but hoping to accomplish our work by our obedient and faithful life. (4) He wrought His work in awful loneliness of soul; we accomplish ours in the midst of sympathising and sustaining friends. There are, however, *interesting points of resemblance*. (1)



Like Him, we are commissioned by One higher than ourselves. As the Father sent Him, so does He send us. We may be moved by many admirable inducements, but the first and strongest reason for undertaking our work is that our Saviour sends us forth to do it. (2) Our work, like His, is that of beneficent renovation. We approach our fellows that we may bring about their restoration to the kingdom, to the likeness, to the home of God. (3) Our weapons are taken, as were His, from a spiritual armoury. He employed, through all His contest, the noble implements of truth, love, purity; the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual; they are the very same as those He wielded—the *truth* of the Living God, the *love* that His own grace inspires, the *purity* which is reproduced from His own beautiful and holy life. (4) We are animated by the same motives which inspired Him: the *compassion* which brought Him down to earth that He might redeem a race sends us forth among the sinful and the sorrowing that we may rescue and restore them; the *yearning desire* to lead back mankind to the knowledge of the Father (ch. xvii. 25) makes our lips eloquent with the message that a Heavenly Father is waiting the return of His wandering children; the “*joy* that was set

before Him,” and the *hope* of heavenly glory which helped Him to drink that cup to the dregs, upholds us in days of darkness and difficulty, and makes us faithful unto death. If, at His bidding, we go in His spirit to do His work, then shall we find that even as the Father welcomed Him to His home and throne, so will He welcome us to the sphere of love and glory in which He reigns.

WILLIAM CLARKSON, B.A.  
BRISTOL.

#### John x. 14.

(Second Sunday after Easter.)

“I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD, AND KNOW MY SHEEP, AND AM KNOWN OF MINE.”

THESE “gracious words” of the Lord Jesus remind us of—

I.—THE DEVOTION OF THE SAVIOUR TO HIS WORK. Many sages and philosophers had spoken or were speaking to the world; many deliverers had offered or were offering their swords or their services to mankind. But these were men who, behind their fine pretensions, hid hopes for their own personal enlargement. Their true character stood out in the day of peril; then they showed themselves the hirelings they were. Not such an one was He—He was “the Good Shepherd.” The good

shepherd had such pure affection for his flock that all thought of his own interests were lost in concern for their safety and well-being; and when the testing moment came, he was ready "to lay down his life for the sheep." Just such an one was the "Great Shepherd of the sheep," the "Chief Shepherd"; He was "the Good Shepherd," whose action in the time of trial proved His devotion to the work He came to accomplish. (1) When *toil* was demanded, He was ready to work, even to utmost weariness and prostration. (2) When *suffering* was called for, He was prepared to endure to the last degree of pain. (3) When *struggle* was needful for victory, He was willing to resist even unto blood striving against sin. (4) When *shame* stood before Him, He bowed His head to the last and worst indignity. (5) When *death* itself confronted Him, He went uncomplainingly on to the tribunal and to the cross. Thus He approved Himself to be the true, the faithful, "the Good Shepherd," to whom the spirit of the hireling was utterly alien, devoted to the high and heavenly task He had undertaken to perform.

II.—THE TENDER INTEREST HE TAKES IN EACH INDIVIDUAL DISCIPLE. "I know My sheep." Christ "knows" us before we

become "His sheep." He "apprehends" us (Phil. iii. 12), lays the gentle, constraining hand of Divine love and power upon us, and leads us into His fold. But the thought in the text is that He has a perfect knowledge of us after we are numbered among His flock. It is a distinguishing, searching, discriminating observation He takes of us. (1) It may *comfort* us that He knows the sincerity and integrity of our hearts. (2) It may *stimulate* us that He knows the reality of the toils and struggles through which we pass in our endeavours to honour and to serve Him. (3) It may *humble* us that He knows with what inferior and even unworthy considerations our better motives mingle as we address ourselves to the work we undertake for Him.

III.—THE RESPONSE HE RECEIVES FROM HIS PEOPLE: "And am known of Mine." It is not such a simple thing as it may seem to "know Christ." It is never a simple thing to know any man. Between the knowledge we have of a man so that we can distinguish his face from that of any other acquaintance, and the knowledge we have of the man whose finest and noblest qualities we perfectly appreciate, there is an almost immeasurable difference. Between the know-

ledge of Christ possessed by the man who distinguishes the outward features of His life and the character of His teaching, from those of Socrates or Marcus Aurelius, and that possessed by one who "abides in Him" through a long life of blessed experience and faithful service, there are all but immeasurable degrees. To know Christ we must *act upon our first knowledge of Him*. We must accept Him as the Divine Saviour we need in our conscious guilt and condemnation: we must confide in Him as in the one unchangeable Friend of our heart; we must follow Him as the one unerring Leader of our life; we must open our hearts to receive His indwelling, illuminating, transforming Spirit; we must work with Him and for Him in the holy fields of Christian helpfulness, and then shall we gain an insight into the beauties and glories of His character which otherwise we could not see; then will He "be known of His" in the height and depth of which our present life admits; and thus shall we be preparing for the larger, clearer, and fuller vision which awaits us "within the veil."

WILLIAM CLARKSON, B.A.

BRISTOL.

### Luke xii. 33.

(Third Sunday after Easter.)

"SELL THAT YE HAVE, AND GIVE ALMS; PROVIDE YOURSELVES BAGS WHICH WAX NOT OLD, A TREASURE IN THE HEAVENS THAT FAILETH NOT, WHERE NO THIEF APPROACHETH, NEITHER MOTH CORRUPTETH."

OUR Divine Lord, in the great sermon from which these words are taken, taught the apparently contradictory duties of freedom from care regarding the future, and yet strenuous preparation for that future. The duties are only apparently contradictory. He who most loyally discharges the second is best qualified to discharge the first. At the second we now look, noticing—

I.—SOME preparation for the future is GENERAL among men. Because of our forecasting faculty and our foreboding instincts all have some sort of bags, purses, banks, &c. to which they hope to turn to meet the emergencies of the future.

"Man never is, but always to be blest."

With some the anticipations, and consequently, the preparations concern only the near, with others the remote, future. The rich fool in the parable was most eager and careful in getting ready for the near future of coming "years,"

but madly unprepared for the vast future of succeeding ages. This often happens.

II.—FOOLISH preparation for the future is very COMMON among men. Every one of us knows those who put their treasures in purses that waxed old, and out of the holes the treasure was hopelessly lost. (1) The *sensualist* does this. The eye, the ear, the taste, indeed not only the nerve of sensation, but the appetite behind the nerve also decays. The epicure's and the profligate's capacity and desire alike wear out. He at last yawns, "Vanity of vanities," or sobs, "We have no pleasure in them." (2) The *worldling* also puts his treasures in perishing purses. Whether it be that his treasure is wealth or fame, he consigns, deposits, either where he will soon lose them. As to wealth, banks break, funds fluctuate, or, at best, death comes to strip him of all. As to fame, the popular breath is a poor perishing purse. The "Hosannas" of one day are the "Crucify Him" of the next.

III.—WISE preparation for the future is POSSIBLE to all who learn of Christ. (1) There are *several elements* of such wise preparation here suggested. (a) There is *surrender* of much in the present. "Sell." Give up; restrain, part with, now. (b) There is *genuine*

*benevolence*. "Give alms." It is by surrender for others, by cherishing the spirit of love in the use of all things, that what we give up is truly kept, what we spend is really saved. The Cross reveals the art of giving so as to become richer, of dying so as truly to live. (2) There is an undoubted *security* about such preparation for the future. The treasure is "in the heavens," the symbol at once of what is permanent as well as pure, lasting as well as blessed. For those heavens are impregnable from any *outward* attack, no "thief" draws near; and are free from any *inward* deterioration, no "moth destroyeth." The life of surrender, and of surrender through the inspirations of love, that is typified by selling and giving to the poor, is the life that is not wasting, but saving its resources. All other life imperils its treasure; this invests it.

EDITOR.

### Ephesians vi. 1.

(Fourth Sunday after Easter.)

"FOR THIS IS RIGHT."

THE motive described in these words is applicable to much more than the one duty with which it is here connected. Indeed it sweeps the whole circle of life. It is sternly in contrast with (a) what is *easy*. The wrong is com-



monly to sinful men easier than the right; to beg than to toil, to drift than to dare, &c. Or with (b) What is *popular*. *Vox populi vox Dei* is not true to history, experience, or Scripture. Or with (c) what is *useful*. Utility and rectitude are not synonymous, unless indeed we grasp the eternal utility. Cicero, long ago, taught that to sacrifice present pleasure in order to get a modification of pleasure at some future time no more answers to our idea of virtue than lending money on good interest answers to our idea of charity. Right as revealed in Christ, as witnessed by consciences as attainable by the help of God is the true motive, test, and standard of character. This maxim or watchword "For this is right," is—

I.—SIGNALLY COMPREHENSIVE. It will include (1) *All moral beings* (a) From child to sage, from man to angel, from mortal to God. (b) *All ages*—from Adam to Noah, from Moses to the millenium. (c) *All details*. The play of the child, the drudgery of the servant, the researches of the scientist, the craft of the statesman. Like a rainbow it spans the horizon. This watchword—

II.—LEADS TO CONFLICT. In Heaven it is a song, but on earth it is a battle-cry. That it leads to conflict is evidenced (a) In

the life of Jesus. (b) The experiences of the good. "When I would do good evil is present with me."

III.—ENDS IN CONQUEST. Right is to be triumphant; it is the cause of God, of Christ, of the Spirit of Truth. Much with which we have to do will fail, much in institutions, in life; but the right in everything is imperishable.

EDITOR.

#### Luke xxi. 1 to 4.

(Fifth Sunday after Easter.)

"AND HE LOOKED UP, AND SAW THE RICH MEN CASTING THEIR GIFTS INTO THE TREASURY. AND HE SAW ALSO A CERTAIN POOR WIDOW CASTING IN THITHER TWO MITES. AND HE SAID, OF A TRUTH I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT THIS POOR WIDOW HATH CAST IN MORE THAN THEY ALL: FOR ALL THESE HAVE OF THEIR ABUNDANCE CAST IN UNTO THE OFFERINGS OF GOD: BUT SHE OF HER PENURY HATH CAST IN ALL THE LIVING THAT SHE HAD."

OUR Lord and Master here appears as a Divine Observer of the Temple treasury. What this narrative records of His action and of His words at this time illustrates—

I.—CHRIST'S DEEP INTEREST IN THE ACT OF RELIGIOUS GIVING. With no mere passing glance, but with steady observation, Jesus watched those who were casting

their gifts into the treasury. He gazed at them (1) *as at those who were in the discharge of a distinct duty*. For the regulations with which they were complying were laws of His Father's house. Such giving was not merely a human custom; it was a Divine ordinance. They were the offerings of God. He gazed at them (2) *as at those who were enjoying a great privilege*. It may be that at this very time He uttered the words subsequently recorded as falling from His lips, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Any way, He was looking at those who might, if they would, have their faces illumined, their hearts enlarged with the blessedness of giving. The niggard groans about contributions to the church treasury, "so many claims;" the generous man sings about them, "so many opportunities."

II.—CHRIST'S THOROUGH UNDERSTANDING OF DIFFERENT GIVERS. He spoke as knowing the circumstances of all; who were rich and who was poor. It is at once solemnising and encouraging to notice that Jesus Christ has complete knowledge of all who come to worship, and what they bring and what they leave at home. All "the superfluity" of the rich, as well as all the penury of "the poor widow" are recognised and weighed by Christ as they can be by none other.

III.—CHRIST'S TEST OF THE WORTH OF GIFTS. The Saviour's praise of the woman who cast in all the living that she had, indicates who is the ideal giver. It is not how much we give, but how much we have left, that betokens our liberality. EDITOR.

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CHILDLIKENESS.—Wordsworth, not long before his death, spoke of having had a great desire for fame, "but that," said he, "has now ceased, so that my sole desire is to become one of *the poor in spirit*, whom our Lord has declared to be blessed."

ZEAL FOR SOULS.—Mezzofanti, who knew sixty-four and talked forty-eight languages, when a young priest visiting a hospital, found a poor foreign sailor dying and longing to confess, but finding no priest to understand him. The sadness of this struck him, and he turned his attention forthwith to languages.

## Breviaries.

### Christian Security.

"WE KNOW THAT ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD."—*Romans* viii. 28.

IN this world of doubt and conjecture, it is refreshing to find a man who declares that he knows what he says is true. Still more refreshing to find that what he says he knows, is *just that* about which we have been *much in doubt*. From the text I learn— I.—That "all things" act **ENERGETICALLY**. They "work." The word rendered "work" here has great force. From it our word *energy* is derived. Used here to denote the most intense, tireless activity. The universe is all alive under the Divine hand. II.—That "all things" act **HARMONIOUSLY**. They "work together." In the mechanism of Divine providence there are no loose pulleys on which idle belts career. "All things work," not frictionally, or at random, but "*together*." We see that "things work," but we cannot see how they "work together." How could we see so much? III.—That "all things" act **BENEFACTENTLY**. They "work together for good." They all play into one grand purpose—"For good," literally "into good." In the light of this text the Christian loses his insignificance, and looms up before us in an attitude of importance and grandeur. It should be remembered that God, not man, is to decide what this "good" is to be. Spiritually considered, when we talk about profit and loss, success or failure, very often we know not what we say. We are like children prattling about the affairs of nations. We may spell a word *defeat*, but God may pronounce it *victory*. We may pronounce a word *gain*, but God may call it *loss*. Men are sometimes congratulated when they ought to be pitied, and the reverse. IV.—THE CHARACTER OF THE PERSONS TO WHOM THIS GRACIOUS ASSURANCE IS GIVEN. "Them that love God." Those who do not love God have no right to its blessed comfort. To remain in sin is to antagonize the arrangements of infinite beneficence, and means danger, and folly, and suicide, and damnation. The great question that shall shape your eternity and mine is, *Do we love God?* We must not forget that the Holy Ghost gives us the *tense* of this verb, "work." The text does not say, all things will, or may, work for good, but "all things" are now working "for good." To honour God and be strong, our love also must be in the present tense.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

THOMAS KELLY.

## Calvary.

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“THE PLACE THAT IS CALLED CALVARY.”—*Luke* xxiii. 33.

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THE annals of nations, the associations of families, the biographies of individuals gather around places. The history of the world centres in the place that is called Calvary. Among the multitude of impressions we receive there, are— I.—THE EVIL OF SIN. Many places are indelibly stained with the memories of sin. What spot more than this? For here (1) *A Being of spotless innocence is put to death by wicked men.* (2) *An unwearied Benefactor is slain by those He came to bless.* At Calvary the tide of evil reached high water mark. II.—THE GLORIES OF SALVATION. Jesus is saving men at Calvary. Note the glory of His salvation. (1) *In what it cost.* We sometimes reckon the cost of a campaign. This cost untold suffering. (a) *Physical.* “I thirst.” (b) *Social.* “Forgive.” (c) *Spiritual.* “Why hast Thou forsaken.” (2) *In what it achieved.* The penitent robber is a trophy and specimen of (a) *changed character,* (b) *changed destiny.*

EDITOR.

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## Christ Lost.

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“HIM THEY SAW NOT.”—*Luke* xxiv. 24.

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THESE words were the climax of the story of grief the two disciples were telling their Great Unknown Companion. They had told Him how the disciples had relied on finding Christ after His death, and how in their search they had seen the women, and their fellow disciples, and the sepulchre, but “Him they saw not.” As we read the record we are reminded— I.—HOW MEN MAY SEE VERY MUCH THAT IS IN CONNECTION WITH CHRIST, AND YET NOT SEE HIM. We have noted what these disciples had seen, and yet had failed to find Christ. They are types of many of us who find books, preachers, services, sanctuaries, sacraments, and yet fail to find Christ. This happens to such now as it happened to the disciples then. (1) *From a disregard of the teachings of Christ.* He had predicted where and what He would be. But they had either not understood or forgotten. (2) *From their seeking for a material rather than a spiritual Christ.* When men seek Him only in sacraments, or the Bible, or creeds, a rebuking voice falls on their ear, “Why seek ye the living



among the dead, He is not here, He is risen." II.—HOW THE NOT SEEING CHRIST IS THE CAUSE OF GREAT MISERY. "They all mourned and wept." Many tears, for great as is the difference between man and man is the difference between tear and tear; but one sorrow, a common disappointment, dismay, irreparable loss. Such is the sorrow (1) *Of those who have never seen Christ.* They have never seen the Light of Life, never heard the music of life. (2) *Of those who having once seen Him have lost Him.* Men on whom others depend lose the vision of Christ and the woe is unutterable.

EDITOR.

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### The Strength of Young Men.

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"I HAVE WRITTEN UNTO YOU, YOUNG MEN, BECAUSE YE ARE STRONG, AND THE WORD OF GOD ABIDETH IN YOU, AND YE HAVE OVERCOME THE WICKED ONE."—1 *John* ii. 14.

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HERE we are taught : I.—THAT A DISTINGUISHING GLORY OF YOUNG MEN IS THEIR STRENGTH. The contrast the context suggests between "the fathers" and "the young men" to whom the apostle is writing, is that to the aged belongs reflection, meditation, wisdom; to the younger, energy, robustness, activity. Young life, except it be abnormal, is the time of activity. The blood dances to lively measures, the limbs are elastic, the intellect is nimble, the affections are strong. This is true of young manhood generally, the apostle is writing to godly young men where this strength is noble, is consecrated. Young David slaying the giant foe of his country, young Joseph conquering carnal lusts, young Stephen triumphing over malice and cruelty of his murderers are *types* of such. Whilst "Only be strong and very courageous"; "Quit you like men, be strong"; are *precepts* for such. And "To him that overcometh will I give hidden manna, white stone, unfading crown, enduring throne," are *promises* to such. II.—THE SOURCE OF SUCH STRENGTH IS IN THE FULL ACCEPTANCE OF GOD'S TRUTH. "His word abideth in you." "His word"; *how much that includes*; "in you," *how completely received*; "abideth," *how permanently retained*. III.—THE RESULT OF THE RIGHT USE OF SUCH STRENGTH IS VICTORY OVER ALL EVIL. "Overcome the evil one." The phrase indicates (1) *Conflict*. (2) *Conquest*. The spell of evil is broken, its domination destroyed, its very fascination overcome.

EDITOR.

## Pulpit Handmaids.

### NATURAL HISTORY HOMILIES.

#### Leviticus xi. 13-19.

In our daily speech we often compare men to animals. To illustrate some trait in his character we call a man by the name of some beast of the field, or bird of the air which has, or is supposed to have, the quality we desire to ascribe to him. He is as surly as a bear, or as fierce as a wolf, or stubborn as a mule, or as cunning as a fox, or as treacherous as a cat, or as revengeful as a wasp, or he is, perhaps, as timid as a hare.

The Bible contains several examples of this kind of symbolism. Ephraim is "a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke." David's enemies are strong "bulls of Bashan." When he would warn the disciples at Philippi against certain false teachers, Paul says:—"Beware of dogs." And our Lord himself, who knew so well what was in man, addressed certain Jews in these terms:—"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers."

Out of several fowls here pronounced unclean by the Levitical law I shall select a few, and will treat of them as *types of character*. I will not discuss the reasons adduced why these various animals were not allowed to be eaten by the Hebrews; but I would suggest, with many of the Commentators, that, perhaps, one reason why they were forbidden was that they had qualities which God wished His people to hold in abomination. He desired the chosen race to shun certain well-known characteristics of these birds. They were not to be Vulture-like, or Owl-like, or Bat-like. On this supposition I will treat of the subject, and may the Holy Spirit help us, so that, from this seemingly unpromising field, we may reap an abundance of wholesome and practical teaching

#### VIII.—THE EAGLE.

"And these ye shall have in abomination among the fowls; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: . . . the eagle."—verse 13.

Its erect, majestic air when at rest, its extraordinary strength, its lofty soaring, and its noble appearance in general have obtained for the eagle the title of the king of birds. Many points in its history and economy are used allusively in Holy Scripture. The eagle affords the sacred writers' illustrations of qualities that are noble and admirable, (Deut. xxxii. 11-12; Is.

xl. 31; Psalm ciii. 5) and of qualities that are ignoble and shameful (Ezekiel xvii. 3-7). Many of the admirers of this bird have felt loath in some cases to admit the accuracy of these latter comparisons, and have maintained, either that another bird was intended, or that the ancients were mistaken in their ornithology. Our Lord says, "Whosoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." It has been stoutly maintained that the vulture must be meant in this passage as the eagle does not feed on carrion, but

confines itself entirely to the prey secured by its own prowess. This is, however, a mistake. The eagle has no such chivalrous feeling as is claimed for it by its admirers, but like the lion—another king, will ignominiously feed on a body which it has found dead and decaying.

The eagle reminds me of those PEOPLE WHO ARE CONSPICUOUS FOR CERTAIN NOBLE AND PRAISEWORTHY QUALITIES, BUT ALSO FOR QUALITIES IGNOBLE AND DESERVING OF THE STERNEST CONDEMNATION. Usually you do not find virtues and vices standing out prominently in the same character. A man whose life is beautified with certain moral excellencies to a very high degree, does not often exhibit moral defects to a similar extent. We do, however, meet occasionally with such men. And I know of none whom right feeling people regard with more pain. We cannot help loving them for their excellencies, but that very love causes us to feel sad and sorrowful over the blots upon their good name.

(1) Here is a man who is just but has no mercy. His rectitude is without a stain.

No one could be more punctual or righteous in his transactions. The people all say, "His word is as good as his bond." At this, however, he stops. There is nothing in him to temper his justice. You never knew him to invade anybody's right; "he renders to all their due." True! But he exacts the same of others, and at any cost. Deeds of clemency, which it was his duty, and which it ought to have been his pleasure to perform, are left undone by him that justice may have unrestricted exercise. Indeed, justice with him is very often a crime. The Bible commands us to "do justly," but it commands us, also, to "love mercy." And our Lord said, "He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy."

There is nothing sadder about the influence of the love of money than its hardening of men's hearts. We have all known men kind and amiable,—men who would not have crushed a worm, who, through the love of money, have been changed into the most heartless tyrants. "Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?" He who in youth—golden

haired, ruddy faced, merry voiced,—was so full of compassion and kindness, sits now in his dingy office, an old man with clouded brow, keen pitiless eye, fixed lips, and determined on opening the flood-gates of woe upon men's homes. He has no pity. His victims writhe under his terrible inflictions, and look appealingly for mercy. But there is none. Mercy? Mercy?

“You might as well go stand upon the beach,  
And bid the main flood bate his usual height;  
You might as well use question with the wolf,  
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;  
You might as well forbid the mountain pines  
To wag their high tops, and to make a noise,  
When they are fretted with the gusts of heaven;  
You might as well do anything most hard,  
As seek to soften that, (than which what's harder?)  
His mercenary heart.”

(2) Another *man is kind, but ill-tempered*. He is the man to apply to if you are in any need. As sure as you ask him he will do you the greatest kindness in his power. What was said of Job may be said of him (*Job* xxix. 12, 13).

But alongside of this great kindness there is a disposition, frequently manifested, to very violent anger. What he builds with his hands he often knocks down with his foot. Carried away with passion, he does not scruple sometimes to trample on men's most ordinary comfort, and to vex them in the most wilful and atrocious manner. Bad temper has its root in selfishness. It arises from excessive regard to merely personal considerations (*Phil.* ii. 3, 4; *1 Cor.* xiii. 5).

(3) But you will find *ill-temper more frequently associated with earnestness*. Warmth of feeling has a distinct tendency to unlovely and unamiable action. When the earnest man, in the fervour of his spirit, gives reins to passion, he sacrifices alike his tenderness and his logic. Nobody can be so unreasonable as your earnest man, and nobody can manifest a greater recklessness in regard to the sensibilities and happiness of others. I have met earnest men, men who were earnest too, as I thought, in a very good cause, and who were truly good men and valuable



members of society, whose words and conduct were little short of demonish. In their eagerness to right a wrong, or remove a grievance, they violated the rights and feelings of their opponents in the most wilful and cruel fashion; and eager themselves in the matter, they had not a particle of toleration for those who were not as warm as they were, and would snarlingly insinuate some radical defect of judgment, or of Christian or moral character.

*The finest character will unite great earnestness and perfect good nature.* You who are earnest will do well to cultivate a gentle and amiable disposition. The cause you have so much at heart will not suffer by your suavity. It will be helped rather. And you yourselves will not suffer by it in your reputation.

Lastly (4) *Another man is moral but niggardly.* I was going to say *pious* but niggardly. He is a member of the Church, and no one is in his place more regularly. He is not even an unfamiliar figure at prayer-meetings, and he is very strong indeed in attending evangelistic services.

Throughout his circle of acquaintances he is looked upon as most respectable, and consistent *on the whole*. On the whole—for there is one unfortunate circumstance about him which gives rise to a good deal of remark, and which, while it may vex some, causes others to regard his religion, if not indeed all religion, as very much of a sham. This man became a Christian principally through the force of one passage. It was that one in Isaiah: "Come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." Some profane people insinuate that his fondness for evangelistic meetings is owing to the circumstance that he hears that text very often repeated in those places, and kindred comforting Scriptures. This man has conscientious scruples about paying seat-rents, and thinks the deacons ought to place the boxes for the offertory where nobody will see them. Our modern system of church collections, in his opinion, is the great obstacle in the way of the salvation of souls. But he does not offer a substitute, nor show how churches

can be built, and ordinances adequately maintained "without money and without price." He pays for the house he lives in, and for the food he eats, and for the clothes he wears; but for church accommodation and the spiritual food he so much relishes, *he depends*, not through poverty, but through niggardliness, *on the charity of his fellow church members*. I have known him condescend to the most miserable subterfuge to save his money. "No; he has so many calls upon him;" omitting to add that the calls were in every instance ineffectual.

We pity the niggard—the man with abundance who has

not tasted, or tasted to the extent he might of the joys of giving. "The height of bliss," says Pope, "is the height of charity." *Men have more joy in giving their wealth than in using their wealth*. Giving is the joy of God. The universe was made and has been preserved in order that the love of Deity might have a channel for its continuous diffusion and circulation. And our blessed Lord came not to the earth to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for the world. The joy He set before Him was the joy of self-sacrifice.

BRISTOL. A. F. FORREST.

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IMPERFECT AND PERFECT KNOWLEDGE.—"The ægis of Athena, the mantle with the serpent fringes, and the Gorgon on her shield are both representative mainly of the chilling horror and sadness (turning men to stone as it were) of the outmost and superficial spheres of knowledge—that knowledge which separates, in bitterness, hardness, and sorrow, the heart of the full-grown man from the heart of the child. For out of imperfect knowledge spring terror, dissension, danger, and disdain; but from perfect knowledge, given by the full-revealed Athena, strength and peace, in sign of which she is crowned with the olive spray, and bears the resistless spear."

RUSKIN.

## PITH OF GREAT SERMONS BY GREAT PREACHERS.

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Sermon by DEAN HOWSON.—Analysis by Rev. T. B. KNIGHT.

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“The Safety of a High Standard.”

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“IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE.”—*Colossians* iii. 1.

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ASSUMING that we earnestly desire to lead a religious life, and are very conscious of the difficulties and perplexities such a life involves, some benefit must result from the careful consideration of the *safety of a high standard*. In matters of religion the hardest road is both the safest and the easiest. Consider—

I.—THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING UP A HIGH RELIGIOUS STANDARD. The subject naturally divides itself into two parts, as affecting ourselves, and as influencing others.

1. *As to ourselves.*

(a) *It prohibits the low standard* too common even among those who have religious aspirations. Here is a double possibility of moral deterioration. (i.) Pitching the standard not very high; (ii.) living below even that low level. The only safety is to make our ideal as high as possible; and to view all deflections and declensions as blameworthy. The law of advance is safe, because the law of deterioration is the only other alternative.

(b) *It enkindles and sustains a noble ambition.* Would we do anything well, we must aim at something better than that which we actually accomplish. No artist, physician, orator, or scholar becomes eminent by aiming at mediocrity. And applying this to the most sacred and serious parts of life, we see that in order to be good at all we must aim at the best. Moral discontent is a healthy state of the mind.

(c) *It facilitates the solution of perplexing moral questions*, by clearing the mental and moral vision,—questions not necessarily of religious doctrines, but which have respect to the regulation of human conduct. (i.) *Mischievous and erroneous questions* may be put, e.g., “What harm is there in this?” when abstractedly it is difficult to say that there is any harm; and yet through asking it harm does practically very often come. Such

a question is a deviation from the highest standard, and in putting it we loiter in the dangerous region of compromise. (ii.) *Safe and true questions* should be asked,—questions which relate to the promotion of one's spiritual welfare, to the fulfilment of duty, to the honour of Christ and to the service of God. The *profitableness* of such questioning is obvious: clearing the air, turning our faces in the right direction, enabling us to see things in their just proportions, so causing all things to fall into their right places. Thus, in this chapter St. Paul, whilst recognising a wide range of debateable ground, adds two important limitations—(a) guarding himself against self-indulgence: "All things are not expedient;" and (b) mastering himself: "I will not be brought under the power of any."

(d) *It prepares for the hour of temptation*, the true nature of imperfect conduct being thereby more readily perceived, and temptation thereto being met with prompt decision and without debate: "How shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" "Shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid." To hesitate in the presence of temptation is proverbially perilous. The habit of the Christian's mind should be that of a soldier on guard: "Stand firm in the Lord and in the power of His might."

It is in this way a "high standard" disciplines mind and heart, correct opinion and correct conduct acting and re-acting on each other, being educated and built up together.

"Be not conformed to this world," &c., "That ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." "In God's light we shall see light."

2. *As to others.* This setting up a high religious standard is—

(a) *An incitement to goodness*, for the spirit of endeavour is most easily communicated to others through our possessing that spirit ourselves. Those who are themselves climbing, lead and help their companions to climb likewise. If our aims are low, others will not catch from us the Christian spirit, but will live below their own standard, which is a very low one, because we have so taught them. Not a safe state of things either for us or them.

(b) *An influence exerted upon others*, and often unconsciously to ourselves. Who are the men who hold society together?



Men on whom the weak lean and in whose presence goodness grows. They are unquestionably those who, having a pole-star by which their course is guided, fortify, nerve, encourage, guide, and rescue their weaker brethren from sinking beneath a low standard, because they, themselves, have been enabled to maintain a high one. This is one of the most sublime parts, though one of the most modest, of our Christian vocation.

II.—THE MEANS FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF A HIGH RELIGIOUS STANDARD.

1. *The imitation of the Lord Christ.* The life we have been describing must have a distinct relation to the example of Christ, and from that example must derive its guidance and power. In Him the highest ideal has been brought to earth and placed within the range of our own experience. One Divine mark of our religion is, that there is nothing below the best in the example set before us in Him. Our supreme safety is in His footsteps.

2. *The cultivation of the three leading graces,—faith, hope, charity.* (a) *Faith.* From faith to faith does the inner life grow. That faith which turns us aside from human standards to the Divine height of goodness. "The things which are seen are temporal: the things which are not seen are eternal." "Endured as seeing Him who is invisible."

(b) *Love.* The largest charity towards others imposes the strictest self-denial upon ourselves. Christian ethics inculcate all tender regard to the consciences, the risks, and the weaknesses of the brethren. "Take heed that ye cause not one of these little ones, that believe in Me, to stumble." "If meat cause my brother," &c. It is a true mark of the divinity of our religion that the strictest self-discipline is coincident with, and proportional to, the largest charity.

(c) *Hope.* It may be confidently and cheerfully believed that a high standard maintained here will make the future safe. Our hope is the Gospel of the resurrection, and we read, "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself," "begotten again unto a lively hope," &c. And struggling onward to know the "power of His resurrection," we shall not only be safe but strong; living in God's sunrise here, on our hereafter the sun shall never set.

CLIFTON.

T. BROUGHTON KNIGHT.

## GERMAN PREACHING.

(FORTY YEARS AGO.)

TRANSLATED BY JAMES GRIGS.

## SCHLEIERMACHER.

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"THIS IS THE VICTORY THAT OVERCOMETH THE WORLD, EVEN OUR FAITH."

—1 *John* v. 4.

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MANY people are accustomed to designate this world by the sad title of a Vale of Tears. How they have come to do so, or what they mean, I know not. If there should be among our brothers one who can justly hold this dreary conviction, he should be able to stand up and say, "I have never on this earth heard other than tones of sadness and grief, the voice of all the sons of men end in complaint and sighs." Always, therefore, swimming in this sea of sorrow, they can never rise on their feet and say, "I will pass beyond it." Always encompassed by the shadow of death, no warming spark of real joy ever reaches them. Never is anything around them illuminated by a benignant ray of well-founded hope. They work incessantly, but an external power mocks them. The bread towards which they stretch their hand becomes stone, and the flowers which they pluck tend to become poisonous serpents. I know not if the people who thus think ever heard of a Ruler who governs the world, or of a Father in heaven who has compassion on His children; but if they have heard of Him—for most of them imagine themselves to be pious persons who long for the better land—I should like to ask them, How they can honour the Creator in calumniating His works, and how they humble their own reason before God when they pronounce a judgment on the world quite different from that which God pronounced, for we read, "God looked on everything that He had made, and behold it was all very good."

Now, however unjust it may be to complain that we must strain all our powers to get through the misery of this world, it is certain that the Scriptures and all wise men have not represented our pilgrimage through this life as a calm journey, without care, on a well-made road, but as a crusade, with arms in hand, surrounded by countless enemies from whom we must win every step by struggle and victory. We are encouraged to put on the shield of faith and the harness of righteousness, to be watchful and sober so as not to be surprised, and to fight as brave soldiers.

Let us turn our attention to the special object of this struggle, and the resources which are placed at our disposal to carry it on. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

We will examine what is meant by overcoming the world, and secondly, show that it is to faith that we owe this victory.

I.—HE WHO STRUGGLES WITH THE WORLD CAN NO LONGER BE ENTIRELY OF THE WORLD ; HE MUST FEEL AND KNOW SOMETHING IN HIMSELF HIGHER AND MORE EXCELLENT, BY WHOSE ACTIVITY AND STRIVING HE HAS ATTAINED TO OBJECTS OTHER THAN THOSE WHICH THE WORLD PRESENTS. It is usual to say of the conflict which there is in the human soul, that there is in man something God-like and also something of the animal. The God-like calls to us to be loving, to be perfect, and "holy as the Father in Heaven is holy." Whoever hears this voice in himself and follows its call begins to raise himself above the earthly and to "seek after the things that are above." He will adorn himself with qualities whose beauty does not perish with this world, he will acquire possessions which will count in eternity, but in this noble striving he meets with a thousand obstacles. The things of this world excite his senses and imagination—the unpleasant will be avoided, and the pleasant will be again enjoyed. Inclinations arise and soon become strong passions. Wishes spring up, and change themselves only too early into violent desires. All kinds of actions become habitual, and then habits exert an ascendancy over the soul which keeps the attention away from all higher objects. Thus the sensual man within us struggles against the spiritual. The voice of desire demands diversion and pleasure, and tries to stifle the mild tones of religion and reason which would call us to virtue and Godliness.

*The enemy with whom we struggle is within us*, namely, the sensual impulses with their train ; but the occasions of their attacks are *without us*, in the (1) *Sorrows*, (2) *Joys*, and (3) *Cares* of this earthly life. In all these we shall be victors over ourselves, that is, we shall overcome the world in its sorrows, joys, and cares.

We must overcome the world in its *sorrows*. This does not mean we are to defy pain as though it did not hurt us, nor that we should for a long time purposely seek it and torture ourselves until our human sensibility becomes quite blunted. There is a certain insensibility given by nature, and peculiar to some people, whilst others have acquired or steeled themselves into it, but this does not belong to our victory, and is not even an excellent quality. To be able to suffer, *i.e.*, to be able amidst grief and pain to retain the memory of the happy situation from which

we have been driven, that is one of our prerogatives, and to renounce it would be a bad victory. We ought therefore to *feel* the evil that crushes us. We ought to work with all our powers to free ourselves from it, so long as this striving is subservient to higher ends.

The errors, the weaknesses, the faults, the evil habits, the immorality which may be still within us ought to seem to us a far greater calamity than any which can wound our sensitiveness or hurt our bodies. The sense of innocence of a pure heart, and of continually growing better, must seem to us a far greater good than the highest pleasure which the making free from a long consuming pain can bring us. Thus, what is *earthly is to be subservient to the spiritual*.

As soon as we perceive a fault that we should avoid, a weakness that we must lay aside, let our soul immediately turn itself to this higher end, even if it be engaged in trying to remove a cruel pain. However great may be the suffering, should it even reach the extreme limit of what man can bear, we must always abhor the thought of removing it by means which involve the least neglect of our duty or violation of conscience.

Suffering, however much it oppresses us, from which we cannot escape without becoming unfaithful to ourselves and to God, must be dear and precious to us, for it is a monument of our strength and of our victory.

The man who never reverses this order of things, and who is never so far misled as to *prefer repose and well-being rather than Godliness and spiritual growth*—he it is who overcomes the world in its suffering.

But we ought also to overcome the world in its *Joys*. This does not mean that we should deny ourselves all earthly joy, and flee before pleasure which may, perhaps, lead us to ruin. This would be no victory, only a flight, by which we will not show and exert our powers, but ingloriously conceal our weakness. Joy ought to be loved and precious to us. We should heartily accept it, but it must not, any more than suffering, be allowed to diminish our care for that which is of more value than earthly good, nor to weaken our zeal for the good and noble. Ah! the struggle with the joys of the world is for most men far more dangerous than the struggle with its suffering. Many a man has resisted the hard blows of circumstances, and met the temptations of misfortune with immovable Christian courage, but has not been able to resist the enticements of pleasure, whose voice allures so sweetly and often seems so innocent. Here is the occasion for the exercise of our most active watchfulness, of our foresight, of our suspicious apprehensions. If we once yield, victory is for a long time, perhaps for ever, clutched from our hands. We are



vanquished by the joys of the world when we so far forget ourselves as to seek a pleasure, however allowable, by means which in the least deviate from the straight road of righteousness, when we purchase a joy by an action which our conscience will condemn too late, when, without acting quite wickedly, we go carelessly after a pleasure whose charm we feel too strong for us, and that it must necessarily by degrees weaken our capacity for good. We are vanquished by the joys of the world when, on a question of devoting a moment of our life to a fugitive pleasure, our attention is more awake, our understanding more receptive, than when a quiet virtue is to be exercised or the tear of suffering dried in secret ; when, in order not to miss the enjoyment of a pleasure which blooms only for the moment, we carelessly postpone, in spite of inward reproaches, the performance of a duty, or neglect to think out some means to the moral improvement of ourselves or others. All resistance that we may, perhaps, have made under suffering is then vain. Our power is gone. Lightness and imprudence will certainly bring to us all the harm which can possibly come to an unguarded heart. What is more, this victory over the joys of the world depends not only on resistance to the lowest sensual lusts and pleasures. We may be led into temptation by what is greatly valued by a noble Christian heart, namely, by sociability, sympathy, friendship, and love ; these become a part of the world which we must overcome the moment they commence to be dearer to us than religion and virtue, and to lead us to what is not right.

Finally, we should overcome the world in its *cares* and business. It is true these belong to our duties, and, so far, should be sacred to us. It is hard to think that we should strive against them, but they exist only for earthly objects, and therefore we must see that they do not become passions and fully possess our soul. Even these cares and that business become a part of the world to be overcome. If the faithful man of business falls into the temptation to serve his country at the cost of his own virtue and righteousness, and, by pushing his zeal too far, burdens and oppresses others unnecessarily ; if the diligent father, anxious for his children, dare not now and then take an hour from his useful work to occupy himself with higher things, to refresh his spirit and to examine his own heart ; if he brings with him the habit of his business, to seek his own advantage, where he ought to act from quite other motives and without reference to his business ; if the industrious mother lives so entirely in the cares of her household as not to leave herself time for the good of her own heart, but be quite prevented from watching how the souls of her children are being

formed, or reflecting how she can best train them to godliness : it is then that these cares become part of the world which we must overcome.

II.—WHAT IS IT THEN THAT WINS US THIS VICTORY ? What is it by which we are encouraged to begin the struggle, and what strengthens us for its dangers and difficulties ? “ Our faith is the victory that overcometh the world.” Of course, faith must here mean something more than a mere acquaintance with even the most strengthening and salutary truths. Knowing and doing are with us, unfortunately, so far apart that we would not be helped by merely knowing. There must be thoughts which stand with living power before the soul, making that which is not visible so real that actions now flow principally from them. This is the nature of the faith which is to help us to overcome the world. It is a living belief in *God*, in *Christ*, and in the *Divine help* in whatever is destined to make us better. It is a habit of seeking refuge, in moments of need, in those calming influences and in the impressions which belong to great truths.

First, then, the *Belief in God*, and, above all, in His all-knowing presence. With all the trouble which men must give themselves to become better, few are so constituted as to rest content with the mere self-approval which they feel. We have all the natural and excusable wish to reap the approval and praise of our fellow-men for our efforts, whatever may be their object ; but this approval of men cannot go with us in our continual striving to overcome the world, for they cannot see where we are tempted, where we fight, where we conquer, and even if they could, we would soon perceive that such approval would seldom be just. They must judge according to the “ outward appearance,” and would often regard as unimportant that which had cost us the greatest effort, and extol with undeserved praises that which had been easy to us. This experience must soon make us indifferent to their approval. When, therefore, the approval of our own heart does not satisfy, what can more encourage us in the difficult struggle, ever renewed, in moments when we weary under what seems thankless work, than this thought of the *all-knowing presence of God* ? It is true no one is about me who sees what I suffer and what I strive after ; no one praises me for the struggle which takes place within me ; all my endeavours are lost to them and their praise, and I must despise myself if I betrayed the affairs of my heart in order to win honour amongst men. But there is *One* to whom my inner being is not closed. The Highest sees with what unwearied steadfastness I meet temptation, what strength I spend to preserve my heart, and not to lose His grace.

He sees and counts the hidden sighs and tears, His approval, of which I am sure, is an abundant reward for my labour.

But He also knows when I would faint-heartedly turn from the right way in which I walk. How would the approval of men help me, if some inward defeat lies exposed before *Him*? Defeat by which my good conscience has long been humbled before the power of the world. Why, then, can I do such a wrong as to let myself be mastered by the world and sin? How can I conceal myself before His all-seeing eye?

In like manner a living *belief in Christ* is also a great resource in our struggle with the world. Nothing is more common, precisely in these moments when it is most difficult to bend our inclination in obedience to our convictions, than that all kinds of doubts arise in us about these convictions. The desires which crave satisfaction, without restraint, seek to corrupt the understanding that it may relax its severity and stamp with its approval that which in calm hours it will again certainly condemn. Even he who has an inner conviction of the truth which leads to salvation will not be free from these moments of temptation, in which he is unhappy enough to think, "Who knows whether it is the destiny of weak man to be always virtuous and always righteous. It may be only a foolish fancy of our proud understanding. Human nature suffers too much in this struggle with its dearest inclinations. It cannot be the will of the Creator that man should make himself such a miserable life. And how if there should be no hereafter, and he who has tormented himself throughout his whole life for the sake of religion and virtue will receive no reward for his pains from the hand of the Righteous Judge."

However erroneous these thoughts appear to us now, they have great weight and are very dangerous in these moments of temptation. Where then can we take refuge except in our faith in Christ? But if this be living and sincere it will immensely strengthen us. The looking to His example pours a balm into the soul which, as it were, runs through all its members, and a noble emulation makes us again robust for the struggle with the world when we were about to succumb. He never allowed Himself to be overcome or wearied, or turned from the right path. What afflictions were not hurled on Him. What joys had He not to forego. Yet nothing hindered Him from fulfilling the will of God to the utmost. Up! Be a man, however hard it may be, and follow in His footsteps. The living remembrance of His words and promises drives away all these disturbing and unworthy misgivings. He has guaranteed to us the circumstances in which we shall enjoy our victory: "Thou hast been

faithful over a few things ; I will make thee ruler over many things." We shall be raised to a perfection of which we have become capable only through having bravely fought and struggled here.

Finally, if we would attain a continual and complete victory over the world, confidence in *the Divine help* is needful in all that concerns our eternal well-being. The easiest undertakings of men miscarry in the hands of a timid spirit without faith in its powers ; the most difficult succeed, and, after many generations, win admiration if carried out with a certain heroic confidence, which treats no obstacle as insurmountable, and holds a high opinion of the powers which lie in the human soul. This heroic faith must accompany us during our whole life in our struggle with the world. It is perfectly compatible with the humility enjoined upon us ; it is certainly becoming in the Christian to whom even his Lord and Master called, " Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith ? "

There is no temptation so small that it may not gain the mastery over us, if we are either over-confident or faint-hearted. There is none so great that over it the man may not be victorious, who with calm courage trusts to his powers and the resources which the grace of God affords him. He makes a right use of these, precisely because he depends on nothing else. The powers which lie in the human soul, animated by religion, strengthened by exercise, are really the Divine help. We must believe in it with a living conviction, and, as all things combine harmoniously in the Divine plans, we must believe that God will so govern the outward circumstances as to render these resources, and the way in which they must work, adequate to the occasion. Even the outward circumstances will prove a support to us if we rightly use them. It would be a foolish hope if we imagined that the outward circumstances must always diminish the temptation and render easy the victory. They often bring still greater burdens and new work, but, even then, they are useful, for it is with temptation, as it is with pain ; if it is trivial it is easy to overcome ; if it is great, it lasts but for a short time, but is never so sharp that human nature is not for a short time able to bear it. This is the case, also, with temptation. When the circumstances render it easy, we soon gain the mastery over it, and that is a Divine favour. When they aggravate the temptation, we must exert our powers in a higher degree, and certainly overcome. This aggravated struggle is also a Divine favour, and, when we conquer, the victory bears a long enduring fruit of grateful memories, which are refreshment and strength when, later on, struggles again occur.

Now, I have led you to consider what is the victory which we must



gain over the world, and what the faith is which wins us this victory. Such reflections come to everyone appropriately, for no day of our life passes when we may not apply them. Now be sober and watch, and after the provocation to struggle, you will find salvation. May these observations have awakened your attention, strengthened your courage, and animated your faith, that you may everywhere show yourselves soldiers of God who fight and never weary.

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THE DAILY PRIVATE USE OF CHURCHES.—“The other day I was at Rouen ; I went to see the grand old cathedral, the great western doors were thrown wide open, and in the centre aisle, not before any image, a poor woman and her child were praying. I was only there a few minutes, and these two figures remain impressed upon my mind. It is surely very good that the poor should have some place free from the restraints, the interruptions, the familiarity, and the squalidness of home, where they may think a great thought, utter a lonely sigh, a fervent prayer, an inward wail. And the rich need the same thing too.” ARTHUR HELPS.

HUMAN NATURE.—“You have had false prophets among you—for centuries you have had them—who have told you that all men are nothing but fiends or wolves, half beast, half devil. Believe that, and indeed you may sink to that. But refuse that, and have faith that God made you upright, though *you* have sought out many inventions ; so you will strive daily to become more what your Maker meant and means you to be, and daily gives you also the power to be,—and you will cling more and more to the nobleness and virtue that is in you, saying, ‘My righteousness I will hold fast, and will not let it go.’”  
RUSKIN.

TOLERANCE OF INTOLERANCE.—“The hardest work for tolerance is to be tolerant of intolerant people ; to see how natural their intolerance is, and in fact thoroughly to comprehend it and feel for it. This is the last stage of tolerance, which few men, I suppose, in this world attain.”—  
ARTHUR HELPS.

## Selected Acorns from Stalwart Oaks.

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“The smallest living *acorn* is fit to be the parent of *oak-trees* without end.”—*Carlyle*.

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RITUAL WITHOUT LIFE.—“We are dead—the Spirit of God is retiring—retired in a very great degree: to what purpose would it be to shape and figure a dead thing this way or that? Just to as much purpose as the endeavour of him we read of in Plutarch who would fain erect a newly-dead body in the posture of a living man.”—*John Howe*.

THOUGHT AS A TOUCH-STONE.—“I like to meet with a man who makes me *think*—who grapples with me, that is, pleasantly,—who brings out my mind. It is like testing me to see what metal I am made of—whether I am genuine—whether I am proof.”—*William Jay*.

THE RELIGION OF COMMON LIFE.—“In our life we should do three things. To gain the victory over our passions,—‘Live ‘soberly’; to respect the claims of our neighbours—‘live righteously’; to derive our motives from the highest source—‘live godly.’”—*Dr. H. R. Reynolds*.

SIN AND SUPERSTITION.—“Where the devil is resident, that he may prevail, up with all superstition and idolatry—sensing, painting of images, candles, palms, ashes, holy water, and new service of man’s inventing; as though man could invent a better way to honour God with than God Himself hath appointed.”—*Bishop Latimer*.

THE CULTIVATION OF REVERENCE.—“In *reverence* is the chief joy and power of life; reverence for what is pure and bright in your own youth; for what is true and tried in the age of others; for all that is gracious among the living and great among the dead, and marvellous in the powers that cannot die.”—*Ruskin*.

INTELLIGENT FAITH AND TRUE PEACE.—“A faith that leans upon its own prejudices cannot stand long in the days when all things are shaken. Nothing but faith can keep you quiet and at peace with such awful problems pressing on you, faith that what you know not now you will know in God’s own time.”—*Dr. Smyth*.

T. BROUGHTON KNIGHT.

## Correspondence Page.

[*Enquiries or Answers will be inserted here concerning Books, or about Texts suitable for Special Occasions, or as to Sermons on given Verses or Topics. Brief letters on any matter that pertains to the work of the Gospel Preacher or Student will also be welcomed.*]

### ANSWERS.

BISHOP BUTLER ON THE USE OF THE WORD "PROBABILITY."

"To us, probability is the guide of life." Here the word *guide* should help us to understand the sense in which "probability" is used.

We live and must act in some way, probability is our guide in this unknown path.

Probability, meaning *like some truth or event, experience* to a large extent determines our conduct. If we find the *slightest* majority on the side of an action succeeding, either in actual or parallel cases, we adopt it. If great consequences be attached to a step which we are compelled to take, though there be a majority of cases of failure against it, yet because *some* have succeeded we take the same step. Its importance leads us to act *very carefully*, and we *think* we shall succeed.

Perhaps "Experience" will explain the meaning of Probability here. For is not our experience or the experience of others our guide? Our knowledge and a great deal that we call reason has its real source in experience—hence probability is our guide of life; we believe God will deal with us in the future as He has dealt with men in the past. What has secured success or happiness to others, in similar or parallel cases, will secure the same for us.

The Ven. Archdeacon of Bristol, a few weeks ago, said "I think for 'probability' in this aphorism you may substitute 'faith.'"

Faith is the very guide of life. And he showed reasons why Butler would avoid using the word "faith."

J. P.

BUTLER'S USE OF THE WORD "PROBABILITY."

*Second Answer.*

In the Introduction to the "Analogy" Butler defines "probability" as that which is *likely*, or like some event or events we know to be true. Though a thing may not be called *probably* true upon very slight presumption, even the slightest presumption is of the nature of a probability, in as much as the lowest presumption often repeated may amount to moral certainty. All inductive argument proceeds upon this basis. But is not *Faith* a kind of probability—in some sense a result of induction? Is it not an expectation that God will deal with us in the future as His dealings in the past lead us to expect? But Butler, by the conditions of his argument with a Deist, was prevented from using such a word as "faith," on account of its religious associations. At the same

CORRESPONDENCE PAGE (*continued*).

time he wished to show that there was much in the affairs of this world analogous to religious faith. So he uses the phrase "acting on probability." But may we not consider that "when Butler wrote 'to us probability is the very guide of life,' he may have meant to include in the wide range of that phrase as defined on the first page of his treatise all that Holy Scripture means when it tells us that faith is 'the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.'" STUDENS.

DOES THE BIBLE SAY THAT EVE WAS MADE OUT OF ADAM'S RIB?

T. D., on page 357 of the lately completed vol. of the *Homilist*, in reference to the question, "Does the Bible say that Eve was made out of Adam's rib?" speaks of "visions" as granted to Abraham, Eliphaz, Elihu, Daniel; and then asks, in reference to Gen. iii. 21., "Did Adam see a vision?" That is, I suppose, did he in vision seem to see a symbolical act performed upon himself in the taking one of his ribs, and the formation of the woman from it. Surely there is the remarkable difference to notice between *his* "deep sleep" and that of those above referred to, that the narration speaks no word of a "*vision*" being given to him. This seems to suggest that his was an entirely "visionless sleep," as contrasted with that of all the others mentioned, and that we may still hold to the literal interpretation and still commonly held idea concerning the passage, and regard woman as having really been made out of man. T. L. L.

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### QUESTIONS.

"HOMOOUSSION AND HOMOIOUSSION."

Can you tell me where to find the clearest account of the controversy that gathered round the terms, "Homooussion" and "Homoiousion"? Does not a large part of modern Theological controversy and error arise from an unconscious heresy or lack of clear belief on this matter? O. N. T.

SPECIAL SERVICES FOR NON-CHURCHGOERS.

Will some of your readers, or yourself, give some instances of successful adaptation of Sunday Services—specially Sunday Evening Services—to interest the masses who are not Church or Chapel-goers?

SOUTHPORT.

W. B.

ALCOHOL WINES AND SCRIPTURE.

Is there any good literature any of your readers can suggest on the question of the alcoholic nature of the wine at the marriage-feast in Cana, and at the Lord's Supper?

BRISTOL.

NEPHALIST.



## Reviews.

MEMORIALS OF A CONSECRATED LIFE, compiled from the Autobiography, Letters, and Diaries of Anne Lutton. London: T. Woolmer, City Road.

The rarity of such a type of life as Miss Lutton lived in this bewilderingly busy age, would be a very good reason for publishing her biography. The beauty of that life is a still better reason. In her, and in such as she, we may find what the modern saint is and can be. The saint of the home, the saint who, blending intellectual pursuits and social engagements and domestic duties with more public Christian activities, redeems the secular from being trivial, and the sacred from being sentimental, will do for our age all that saints of stricter orders have done for earlier centuries, and more than they did. During almost the whole of her 89 years Miss Lutton lived a life of most remarkable consecration to God. And in perusing the pages that, with unusual vividness, bring that life before us we have been most struck—not with her powers as a preacher to women, and a Methodist class leader, which were very great, but with the combination of character that is evident all through, and, perhaps, finds no more characteristic illustration than in the following notes about her early and her latest years. “‘Latin classics could not last for ever. I began to dread a famine. I had heard of Greek poets, historians, and orators; might I not read them? I well knew I could have no aid, but must rely on the Divine blessing which by this time had become my never-failing source of strength . . . I learned, in addition to Latin and Greek, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, and read some of the best writers in these languages. Then I read Hebrew, Samaritan, Syriac, Arabic and Persian. Chaldee came in naturally, and I have also done a little at Æthiopic, Hindustanee, Russian, and Irish.’ In little matters she always seemed to have at hand just what one wanted in her pocket. Oh that wonderfully capacious, that many-partitioned, that most useful pocket! What did it not contain? If anyone was ill there was a smelling bottle; if tired with reading, a lozenge was offered; if a pin were required the well-filled pincushion was produced; if a memorandum were needed, there was an ivory tablet and the gold pencil-case at hand; a penknife or a fruit knife was ready on occasion; if a letter had to be posted the stamp case was brought out; if a sick person was visited, it never failed to produce a Testament for reading, and often a tract to be given, and the purse ever open to a case of distress; or if a point of Biblical criticism was on the *tapis*, the pocket always contained the Greek Testament.”

The perusal of the life open before us may well inspire ministers to seek to produce Christian characters of such manysidedness, or we may, perhaps, better say of such wholeness as Anne Lutton.

THE HIGHWAYS OF LITERATURE. By DAVID PRYDE, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S.E. Edinburgh: W. P. Nimmo.

The preface to this book will indicate its character, style, and purpose. “The multitude of books has now become almost overwhelming. Many of these are comparatively worthless; and it is quite possible for a man to go on reading for a lifetime and never light upon the grand standard works. It is absolutely necessary, therefore, that every earnest reader should be able to discover the best books, and study them properly after they have been discovered. This is precisely the task which the present work undertakes. Both in the Chapter on Books in general, and also in those on different kinds of literature, it lays down rules by which the reader, in the *first* place, may identify for himself the best authors, and, in the *second* place, may study them in such a way that they will be of use in the duties of every day life.” This book consists of eight chapters, the subjects of

which are : Books in General—Works of Fiction—Biography—History—Poetry—The Drama—Oratory—Mental Philosophy. These chapters are written in a manner that can scarcely fail both to interest and instruct. The author throughout shows himself to be a man of extensive reading, keen discrimination, high appreciation of the best authors and their best thoughts, and possessing withal a style of expression indicative both of beauty and of power.

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THE MESSIAH KING. By JAMES WITHER. London: S. W. Partridge and Co.

"In placing," says the author, "the following pages before the Christian reader, the writer does not aim to instruct those who have had greater advantages than himself, but rather to invite Christian believers, generally, to a solemn inquiry as to the Scriptural foundations for the views so strongly enforced upon his own convictions. The vast importance of the subject, whether referring to the beneficent designs and intentions of the Supreme Being, or the happiness of the whole human family, presents sufficient claims for the most earnest investigation, however long the inquiry may have been deferred." This book is not the production of a professional religious author, nor that of a mere conventional evangelical, but of a man who by independent enquiry into the Gospel of Christ has reached strong convictions which seem to force an utterance. These convictions for the most part appear to be in agreement with the Word of God and are of great practical importance.

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INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY. By W. GARRETT HORDER. London: Elliot Stock.

"The real purpose of this book," says the author, "is to show that the whole order of things amid which man's lot is cast, as well as his own nature, are studded over with hints of immortality. There is here no attempt to set forth all such hints, but only those which, to the mind of the writer, seemed the most impressive. He has found some of these to be helpful to minds that were perplexed on this great subject, and thus it is at their suggestion and request that they are offered to that wider circle which can be reached only through the press. It will be a great joy to know that they have removed any cloud of difficulty, or in any way strengthened hearts that are perplexed to look on with more assurance to that higher realm, in which, as the writer believes, our natures will reach out to their highest development and fulfil their noblest mission." This is a very valuable little work on the momentous subject on which it treats. It teems with brief extracts from many of our best authors, breathes out many noble thoughts in eloquent phrases. Mr. Horder was fired with a lofty aim and has wrought it out with unusual success.

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THE WORK-A-DAY WORLD. By E. WORDSWORTH. London: Hatchards.

This book endeavours to aid those who live in this work-a-day world not merely to look beyond it, but to look into it. It is written evidently by one not only possessing pure taste and great refinement, but inspired with a Christly spirit, and has a high practical purpose.

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EXCELSIOR: Helps to Progress in Thought and Action. Vol. IV. Sunday School Union. Old Bailey.

This volume, intended to interest the senior scholars in our Sunday Schools, contains much that is bright and attractive, and maintains a high tone throughout. The aim of its editor and the general scope of the magazine may be judged from a glance at its contents. Here are short papers on Natural Science, stirring tales of Adventure, suggestions for the employment of winter evenings, hints on public

speaking, puzzles, enigmas, and acrostics, short stories of Notable Lives, &c., &c. The chief worth of the volume is given to it by a series of papers on "Scripture Figures and Eastern Facts," by Rev. W. Spencer Edwards. They are written simply and pleasantly, and throw a flood of light upon many passages and allusions that to most Bible readers convey no meaning. The principal tale, "A Life's Motto, or Clement Markwood's Victory," is well written and full of interest. The incidents are natural and lifelike, and are wisely left to teach their own lesson. But while there is much to praise, honesty compels us to say that the book is by no means free from padding. Much of its moralizing is dull and long-winded and utterly wanting in force. We are greatly mistaken if in the case of some of the articles, the mental and manual labour together cost their writer more than half-an-hour. The book is well got up in strong and handsome binding, and its pages are enriched by a number of illustrations.

EXPOSITION AND SERMON. By the Rev. Dr. MCAUSLANE. No. 3. London: Penny, Paternoster Row.

This number in the series Dr. McAuslane is publishing has as subject of its exposition, "The Tax Gatherer," and of its sermon, "Divine and Human Workmanship." In the first, Dr. McAuslane catches the spirit of the narrative with unusual keenness, and adapts its teachings with much quaintness, honesty, and force to our daily life. Zaccheus lives on its page, and many a modern counterpart of Zaccheus lives there too, while some who are sad and sombre contrasts to Zaccheus are made to feel ashamed of the contrast. The sermon is on the well-worn text, "We are labourers together with God," and ably shows with unaffected originality and power how this truth is illustrated in the Operations of Nature, Secular Pursuits, the composition of the Bible, the Sacrificial Death of Christ, and the Salvation of the Soul.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE WORLD. The Inaugural Address Delivered before the Congregational Union of South Australia. By Rev. OSRIC COPLAND. Adelaide: Thomas & Co.

Happy is the ecclesiastical assembly that has such a chairman, and that has the discernment to choose such an one. For Mr. Copland, whom the editor is glad thus as an old fellow student to greet though afar off, has dealt with a grand theme in a great breadth of sympathy, and with unflinching loyalty to Christ. His concluding words are very indicative of the spirit of the entire address. "I once saw a very beautiful picture of the Crucifixion. In the foreground stood our Saviour's Cross, whilst the great city with all its human interests loomed in silent grandeur behind, with the shadows settling upon it. What an illustration is this, I thought, of the place the world should hold in our thoughts and our affections. It is there, yes, there with its struggles, with its politics, with its social life, with its literature, with its art, with its science, with its amusements, with its business, it is certainly there, but its place should ever be behind the Cross, behind the Cross."

THE HEALING POWER OF CHRIST. By the Rev. W. J. HUMBERSTONE. London: Elliot Stock, Paternoster Row.

Though this is scarcely a fitting title for this entire volume of quiet, thoughtful, and refined meditations, it describes the whole more appropriately than names of the first articles in volumes, similarly used, often do. For at least half of the twelve chapters more or less directly group themselves round the central thought of the title. And, indeed, the whole influence of the book is rather healing than

awakening or arousing. It is manifestly, as Mr. Humberstone in his self-deprecating preface says, the production of a man's recovery from overwork, and seems to us to be a leaf plucked by his tired nature from the tree of life for the healing of his readers. We should rejoice in another volume that would be the vigorous outcome of his more robust health.

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ANNALS OF THE EARLY FRIENDS. New Series. Richard Davies, and other Biographical Sketches. By FRANCES ANNE BUDGE.  
THE BARCLAYS OF URY, AND OTHER SKETCHES OF THE EARLY FRIENDS. By FRANCES ANNE BUDGE. London: Samuel Harris & Co.

Miss Budge is doing good service in popularising the facts of the early history of the Quakers. Their first preachers were zealous evangelists and martyrs for religious liberty, and the influence of their story must be helpful now that the Society is returning to its early aggressive spirit and labours. The Methodists have long used the autobiographies of their first lay preachers to stir up the zeal and piety of the Societies; these twelve sketches can hardly fail of a similar result among all who read them. The sketches of the Barclays, of Isaac Pennington, and Alexander Jeffray, are those most interesting to the general public.

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VOICES OF THE TWILIGHT, AND OTHER POEMS. 108 pp. By E. N. CAPPER. London: Samuel Harris & Co.

Many of Miss Capper's poems are musical, and all are marked by a spirit of joyous yet chastened piety. Some of the poems, such as "We would see Jesus," and "Discouraged because of the Way," have long been in favour with what is called "the religious public." But the workmanship is unequal, and the ear is jarred upon at times by halting rhythm.

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ENQUIRE WITHIN UPON EVERYTHING. London: Houlston & Sons, Paternoster Square.

This New Edition of an old book is a wonderful treasury of just such information as every household almost daily wants. Amongst the three thousand it supplies there is almost every time-honoured recipe for nearly everything the mother, the nurse, the cook, the gardener, &c., may need. Do we ask some rudimentary question in chemistry or astronomy or the other sciences, do we want to meet some pressing need about a dinner or an accident, the shape and texture of a garment, or the accurate preparation of a manuscript, the laws of a game, or the leasing or decoration of a house? we shall find some serviceable information within the covers of a book that is truly everybody's *vade mecum*. If any directions are out of date and old-fashioned, we think they are the medical ones; but when doctors differ, who shall decide?

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THE ROMAN STUDENTS. By D. ALCOCK. London: T. Fisher Unwin.

This is a tale of the Renaissance. The incidents introduced into this book are instinct with historic memories, and will scarcely fail to interest the reader from beginning to end, suggesting from page to page as he proceeds many harrowing thoughts. The book is printed in good type, on good paper, and is elegantly "got up." A very nice present for the young.

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ART IN EVERYTHING. By HENRY FAWCETT. London: Houlston and Sons.

This work is dedicated to Sir Frederick Leighton, President of the Royal Academy. It is a reproduction of articles which appeared in the *Churchman's Magazine*. Its purpose is to call attention to the value of art in matters of every day life. Although so much has been said of recent years of the æsthetical and



high art as to have induced some thoughtful men to pronounce the whole thing one of the cants of the age, the study of the beautiful, both in nature and the productions of human genius, must have a tendency to refine and elevate the mind.

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THE LIBRARY MANUAL. By J. HERBERT SLATER. London: L. Upcott Gill.

This is a Manual on the interesting subject of Bibliography, and consists of two sections—the theoretical and the practical. It is a guide to a formation of a library of rare and standard books. In the first section there is a treatment on books generally, and in the second on books and their Manual. It is a most valuable Manual for the hands not only of all literary men and all lovers of books, but all who aspire to the honour of authorship.

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OUR CHILDREN'S CONCERT; A BOOK OF ANTHEMS, SONGS, AND CHORUSES ARRANGED FOR CHILDREN. London: W. Mack, Paternoster Square.

We hope that this little book may be the first of many like it. We have no doubt it will contribute to many a pleasant evening. The melodies are, for the most part, bright and pleasing, while their arrangement leaves nothing to be desired. One or two of the anthems will require some determined practice before they are thoroughly mastered, but this will only add to the pleasure they will give when learnt. Amongst the lighter pieces we notice as specially good a March entitled "To the Tap of the Drum," set to a famous and stirring air in "William Tell."

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THE CHILDREN'S HANDEL. London: Angener and Co., Regent Street.

This book contains short pieces for the Pianoforte—thirty for Piano Solo, six for Duet. They are selected and arranged without octaves, fingered and revised by Herr Pauer. It contains a careful biographic sketch of the illustrious composer. We need scarcely say that the musical compositions are of the choicest kind.

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THE MOTHER'S TREASURY; containing Hints and Helps for the Household. London: The Book Society, 28, Paternoster Row.

This volume for 1882 ought to have had an earlier notice from our pen, and would have done so but for the crowd of books out of which we have to select some for priority of review. Now that we have opportunity we should like emphatically to recommend this well printed, well illustrated, well written, and altogether well edited serial. To thousands of mothers of all classes of homes this Treasury would be a little treasure; for it not only puts into the hand very much in the way of narrative, of poem, of music, and of maxim that would be of direct use to them in talking to and training their children, but provides at least much in the way of counsel, cheer, hints, and examples, and even inspiration for mothers themselves. If any book could satisfy the now familiar advertisement, "Wanted, a Mother's Help," we have no hesitation in saying this would be the one.

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PRIMITIVE METHODIST QUARTERLY REVIEW. London: Ralph Fenwick, Sutton Street, E.

We are glad to see this excellent Quarterly Review holding on its way. This number contains articles on Frederick Douglas, the great negro orator, the Transcendental in New England, Ralph Waldo Emerson, &c., &c. They are well written. "The Symposium" seems to us a very valuable part of the work, which altogether reflects great credit on the earnest and useful body of which it is the organ.

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SUNSHINE. Edited by W. M. WHITTEMORE, D.D. London: George Stoneman.

Here is an Annual for Children, containing stories, pictures, poems, puzzles, &c. It will bear favourable comparison with some of the best of its kind, and bears in it the promise of long life and usefulness, and such we heartily wish it.



## *Leading Homily.*

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### MAN'S DIVINE SONSHIP AND HUMAN BROTHERHOOD.

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“AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?”—*Genesis* iv. 9.

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**T**HE feeling of our sonship to God in Christ, is a topic which is in a certain external and conventional sense very familiar: and yet it needs to be constantly dwelt upon as expressing the fundamental truth of human life, and embodying in itself the only sure guarantee for any continuous progress of the social virtues.

It needs this reiteration because our conventional acceptance of such a relationship is apt to be so compatible with a life which has no real apprehension of it, and exhibits no deep traces of its influence.

This gift or consciousness, or revelation of the Divine life in us, this faith in the Father of spirits, as the source of all thought and love, and the necessary presupposition of our own spirit (designate it how you please), has in fact no great personal value until it frequents the inner chambers of our thoughts, until it makes its home as a ruling and creative influence in those penetralia of the personal life in which our tastes are formed, our active purpose gathers its momentum, and the character assumes its shape.

Therefore, before we can call it ours in any practical sense, it must have come to pervade our inner life, as some strain of

divine music, some soul-stirring symphony of a great master, or some voice of the poets, comes and comes again unbidden across the chords of memory or feeling, till it seems to be with us always, till it hovers round us and lives in us, till it is interwoven with our life as an inseparable part of it, a transforming influence.

And the claim of this feeling thus to enter, and bear rule in us, is paramount, because it is a power which, when it takes possession of a man's heart, lifts it to new levels and transfuses it with a finer quality. The sense of his personal relation with the Divine, seems, in fact, to clothe his life with new attributes. The balance and play of it are so altered that he is a new man; and it is no exaggeration to say of this consciousness, as Darwin himself has confessed of man's belief in an omnipotent God, that it ennobles its possessor; for we mean nothing less than this when we acknowledge, as we are often compelled to do, that a life so inspired, and moving always within the circle of such a consciousness, is not only different in kind from the life which lacks it, but gives out a finer tone, and vibrates as with the music of some higher sphere. We feel when in its presence that we have to do with a vital force which touches chords in the heart, that seemed but for such a touch to have no possibility of music in them. It tells us of undeveloped faculties and gifts; it brings us experimental truth of our spiritual kinship and capacity. If this is not a real indication of the true life, the higher life, then language has lost its force, and such terms have no meaning. But we are justified and confirmed in our high estimate of this feeling if we go yet a step farther. If we observe its effect on any character, we see that there is no other power to be compared with it as the spiritualizer of our common life amidst all the manifold and conflicting variety of forces which hold our modern world in their strong embrace. If, then, we look and hope for the regenerating influence of any Divine Spirit which is to work in harmony with the growing enlightenment of men's widening thoughts—and no spirit can claim to be a true spirit, or, in any intelligible sense, Divine, which fails of this or is incapable of dwelling with reason—then the anchor of our hope must rest on this revelation of the spirit of sonship and brotherhood in Christ,

this consciousness that our life emanates from the thought and love of God, and is comprehended by it, girding us though we do not know it.

The drift of the world, or let us rather say the growth or evolution of human life in the providence of God, compels us to the belief, whether we like it or not, that the great ecclesiastical structures which the centuries have reared around the Cross of Christ, must either be simplified, stript of this or that accretion, which has fulfilled its purpose and discharged its function, or else lose their hold over the spirit of men, as the light broadens around them, and new methods mould their thoughts in accordance with the imperative dictates of new discovery, and faith has to be adjusted to new surroundings.

An obscurantist religion is at length fully acknowledged to be self-condemned and doomed to failure.

We do not doubt, any of us,—there is no person in this University who really doubts—that the scientific spirit is destined to strengthen its hold on men's minds, leavening and modifying all their thought.

So much being admitted, does it not become more and more clear that the only sure basis of any harmony between spirit and knowledge, thought and devotion, experience and hope, the only living and enduring root of any character-moulding faith in the life behind the veil—the continuous personal life—the life of indestructible consciousness that shall be a fruition of our present rudimentary spiritual strivings, must be sought for, not under the stereotyped form of some ecclesiastical inheritance, but in the putting on of the spirit of Christ—*τὸ ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν χριστὸν*—as the spirit of that divine life which shines through all phenomena.

It is this which draws us back after all enquiries to St. Paul and to St. John for the *eirenikon* which, in its essence, never changes, though it must be recognised as always growing—a tree of life, putting forth fresh leaves and branches, season by season, in the long lapse of secular progress.

In St. Paul it lives as life in Christ, life hid with Christ in God, life that roots itself in that service of faith which is perfect



freedom, and blossoms forth in charity. It breathes on every page through the constantly-reiterated *ἐν χριστῷ*, declaring the divine absorption of his individual life.

In St. John, again, we feel it as the sense of union with the Father. To him the life of Christ-like humanity, life purified from its taint of animalism, and shaken free of the chilling frost of selfishness, the life of every consecrated soul—that is, of every soul which is fulfilling the end of its creation—is the manifestation of the Father in the spirit of self-sacrificing love. We return to these teachings, because we see in them our main hope for the higher life, that life which commends itself to the reason as the ultimately satisfying life, the life which grows and brightens with using, and does not sink in deterioration, or die out in ashes.

And we do this, because we feel the truth of the saying that progress in life consists in re-awakening continually our sense of its divine source and quality, and that “the whole difference between the deepest insight and the saddest blindness is that between the conscious and the unconscious presence of the same divine realities.” “How can we expect,” says the writer who has spoken thus of our life, and who is himself one of the freest of thinkers, “how can we expect to know either nature or life but by the hermeneutics of a godlike spirit? It is the pure, faithful, devout, and tender mind, which has the best key to the mysteries of humanity and the counsels of the Infinite. Our life, then, is a work of interpretation; and the scepticism which men affect towards their higher inspirations is often not honest doubt, but guilty negligence.”

“The herds,” he adds, “that low amid the Alpine echoes have, no less than you, the outline of the everlasting hills, and the verdure of the pine-cleared slope painted on their vision, and the chant of the distant torrent swelling and fainting on their ear; is their perception truer,—are they nearer to reality, because they cannot, with you, meet the sublime gaze of Nature, and see through to the eternity of God? The grandeur and the glory that you behold, are they not there? The divine expressiveness, the speaking appeal to your silent worship, the mingling of some-

thing secret with your spirit, as if unseen thought were flowing from the mountains and the sky, to meet the answering radiation of your soul—are these which are the human privilege, a phantom of unreality, a delusion which the fortunate brutes escape? It is impossible.”

We do not simply prove our life-giving, inspiring, and transforming truths as a scientific theorem, and then have done with them. We recognise them as planted in our inmost nature, as implicit and latent; and our real business is to discover them, and give them room for vigorous life under the sunlit heavens.

It is so because our life is not a mechanism. We may see it, we do see it, no doubt, more and more as the prophet saw it in his vision, wheel within wheel; but as it was with him, so, always, the spirit of life is in the wheels, and we hear a voice from the firmament which is over our heads; and hearing the voice, we must be dull indeed, if we do not pray for the cleansed ear which can truly distinguish the witness of the Spirit that we are the children of God.

It is this which determines the method of all the preacher has to say, and my purpose is accomplished, if I succeed in any degree in stirring up the pure mind by way of remembrance: and if I thus help to deepen somewhat in some soul of this congregation the feeling of the encompassing sense of our divine nature and kinship; for this, while it alone forms an enduring intellectual basis for the spiritual life, is also alone strong enough to save us from the dangers which are partly rooted in our animal nature, and partly fostered and intensified by the special drift and tendency of our time; and which threaten, in consequence, as with a two-fold risk, to degrade our life.

Of these dangers, the one which is likely to press most heavily on us who are here to-day, is probably that of exaggerated individualism, either in the form of a more or less refined selfishness, or of scientific egoism, developed on the lines of freedom.

And it is the duty of tempering this by the infusion of the religious spirit which I desire to press upon your thoughts. Wheresoever it is not so tempered you will find it working in

your life, or in the life around you, with a disintegrating power which is at once new and old,—old as being inherent in us, and having to be encountered afresh by every individual; new, as being intensified by the growth of new theories of liberty, and by the economic conditions of competitive industrial life, and still more as having incorporated into itself a new thread of scientific or philosophic influence.

Thus in various ways, if left to rule unchecked, it is found to be vitiating both our personal and our social life, and threatens to do so more and more. It assumes new shapes amongst us without warning, and without any categorical recognition, giving its impulse to some stream of tendency, or growing with subtle growths.

And the point which needs to be emphasised afresh is this that, as in previous generations, or in other forms and classes of society, so here amongst ourselves, in you or me, or any of us, this principle of egoistic individualism has never yet been tempered or modified, or if you will (for are we not God's husbandry?) nursed, tended, dug about, and watered, as it should have been, by the spirit of Christian sacrifice or social enthusiasm, based on the feeling of our living sonship in God, the common Father.

As the spiritual nature gathers strength in men, and their aspirations grow keener and their vision clearer, they feel the more how this spirit of egoism, though it has hitherto been yielding slowly to Christian influence, is constantly vitiating the general life, retarding its progress and darkening its horizon by its excess or misdirection in a thousand ways; and most of all, perhaps, in the hearts of some of those who claim to be most enlightened.

It meets us wherever we turn. Even the history of religion itself is a perpetual and forcible reminder how great a danger it is. It has vitiated the life of the pietist of almost every generation, whose religion is so often a timid egotistic seeking after the salvation of his own soul; his life spoilt in consequence by its central thought and motive. Thus formerly it developed superstitions and asceticism, binding on men's hearts burdens

which God had never laid upon them; and thus still it fills the minds of men and women with false hopes and fears.

But this is perhaps the least of its dangers to you or me. It is in other fields that we see it increasing its dominion, and making its chief conquests.

Almost every advance of civilization which especially distinguishes our century, has tended to give this principle some new hold upon the common life.

Thus if we look to see what it is that sets in motion all the strongest forces of our multiform competitive society, we find it to be this same spirit of materialistic individualism.

It is this that wakes up the vast machinery of commercial and industrial activity every morning, and sends its stream of influence throbbing through all the great arteries of our national life. There is no corner of our society, commercial or social, political or artistic, which it does not invade. It insinuates itself even into our liberal studies, tending to make competition the chief stimulus, and material advantage the chief measure of success.

But it assumes its lowest form in the luxurious pleasure-seeking class, both in youth and age; in the men of much leisure and no acknowledged duties, who have been taught, as possibly some here may have been, by their up-bringing, by servile dependents, by habitual surroundings and associates, to regard themselves as a centre, and the satisfying of their wants and fancies as the chief end of daily life.

Thus, a self-regarding individualism flows over and affects the average sphere all round us, till it seems to infuse its quality into the very atmosphere we breathe, and enters into and pervades all the fibre of our thought and feeling.

Even the growth of individual freedom which is the most precious of gifts, as being the one indispensable condition of all true living, contributes a new element to it.

Still more is the volume of its force intensified as wealth increases and easy circumstances become more common, as enjoyments are diffused, and the world develops more attractions for the mass of men. Under these pervading influences our time



might well be designated as pre-eminently a period of materialistic egoism—a transition time, no doubt destined to be superseded by a higher form of life, and already, we trust, sowing the seeds of such a life in many a young mind; but still charged with the elements of inevitable deterioration and moral decadence.

And there is little hope of our escaping this deterioration unless its germs are stifled in us by a countervailing spirit; that is, unless the sense of our spiritual kinship and moral dependence on God, the source of conscious life, with its feeling of our individual consecration and the passion of moral duty grows and deepens, and is intensified, enlisting our active powers as with a sacramental obligation.

But it may be felt that this, after all, is only the world-old danger that haunts every society, and hangs as the shadow at the back of every individual life.

It is but the latest form of the trial and the stress of warring elements in our complex nature.

It has always been thus, you may say, with the mysterious action and reaction of the two poles of our conscious organism, the selfish instincts, and the generous, the animal, and the spiritual. But this is not quite the whole matter. In this as in other things there come critical and determining epochs, in which some new element seems to start into life and take possession of men and rule them, or some old element rises up afresh as with a new strength, and re-asserts itself with new force.

Thus the revelation of the Spirit of God in Christ lifted men to a new moral and spiritual platform. It inspired their life with a new motive, and altered the whole balance of forces in it. And so for generations and centuries the spirit of Christian socialism has been slowly advancing, and the spirit of egoism has been compelled to retire from one after another of the strong places in the human heart, till it has become almost universally recognized as having no rightful claim to rule it, and as being, in fact, the expression of that part of our nature which should be subordinate, fulfilling necessary functions, but a usurper and intruder wherever it claims to direct the life of either individual or society..

Such is the inheritance of long accumulated spiritual wealth to which we have been born. But just when men seemed agreed on all this, and the battle of principles was ending, individualism revives afresh. It assumes new activity, and asserts its claim of primogeniture under the stimulus of freedom, and the inspiration of the latest philosophy, affecting men's thoughts and views of life in a new fashion.

It is no longer the individualism of self-regarding instincts, springing from the root of appetite or passion, with which you have to do in the discipline of your moral and spiritual life. It is something more than this which is leavening the crowded societies of the great hives of human population. It is the old instincts strongly reinforced and under new leadership.

The intellect, which, under the banner of Christ has always protested against the dictates of individual self-regard, beckoning men upwards, and calling them to the duty of sacrifice, as a primal and fundamental human duty, begins to be subtly tempted to enlist itself on the egoistic side.

The evolutionist, telling us of the growth of all our sentiments, taking us back to germinal forms, and then leading us upwards through struggle and survival, makes the ruling motive in every early stage of life essentially egoistic.

And the question arises, where and how is this motive to change its character? Is the last utterance to be still but an echo of the primeval question—"Am I my brother's keeper?" If so, the outlook is sufficiently doubtful; for how can we hope that men's sense of the moral imperative will be kept permanently higher than their rational conviction? If this be all, life for self will not only continue to come first; it will claim to do so as of indefeasible right; and life for others will have to take the second place. If man in his best estate is necessarily self-regarding in the first instance, and only sympathetic afterwards, then human life remains a competition, and the Christian ideal is but a splendid mistake.

If this be the last word, we must repeat again, however sadly—*ἄρα χριστος δωρεὰν ἀπέθανε*. Our life is burdened once more with the yoke of the law; and we hear the same two voices still

disputing, still in discord, on the last page of scientific research, as at the beginning of our religious history. Of this strong tide of influence it may well be asked, how will it affect you? Accept it as final, and it is useless to blink the answer.

It is, alas! only too probable that in such a case it will strew your course with wrecks and failures. For we see how it seizes upon some men as the self-seeking spirit, that spirit which has neither good citizenship nor Christianity in it, the spirit of competition or greed, or personal advancement, drying up the nobler and more generous impulses, and narrowing their sympathies down to unmitigated worldliness; we see it attacking others as the unhappy and evil genius of a morbid self-analysis, or an agnostic cynicism—a truly sad antithesis to that spirit of faith and hope and charity which is the gift of Christ. It entices others, and these perhaps the greater number, in the grosser form of self-indulgence, the spirit of indolence or luxury or sensual sin, with all its debasing consequences.

But our heart rebels against any one of these as the end of our creation; and our thought rejects the suggestion which lies at the root of them, and on which they feed, that a man's life is centred on himself.

We cannot rest in this conclusion. There is, in fact, no possibility of any rest until we have settled it with ourselves that our higher consciousness gives us touch of the reality of the Divine and everlasting, when it declares that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs, joint-heirs with Christ.

This we believe to be the last word for us on the mystery of our being and destiny; and in this belief we may take up the language in which St. Paul concluded his great argument, and say,—“I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

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# Homiletical Commentary.

## HOMILETIC SKETCHES ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

### Worship.

"Praise ye the Lord.

Praise God in His sanctuary: praise Him in the firmament of His power.

Praise Him for His mighty acts:

Praise Him according to His excellent greatness.

Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet:

Praise Him with the psaltery and harp.

Praise Him with the timbrel and dance:

Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.

Praise Him upon the loud cymbals:

Praise Him upon the high sounding cymbals.

Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord."—*Psalms* cl. 1-6.

HISTORY.—"Nothing is known as to the author or date of this Psalm. It may have been composed by the latest collector of the Psalter in order to form a conclusion to the whole book; or having been written independently it may have been placed in its present position because of its fitness for the purpose. The tenfold exhortation, 'Praise ye,' preceded and followed by Hallelujah, perhaps favours the former suggestion, the number ten signifying completeness. But with whatever purpose originally composed, we can conceive no more fitting

conclusion to the Book of Praises than this composition. It calls on all living creatures to praise God in all places of His worship, for all His glory and greatness, with all the accompaniments of solemn pomp and joy." Each of the five books of the Psalter ends with a doxology, and now the whole book ends with a universal Hallelujah.

ANNOTATIONS: Ver. 1.—"*Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in His sanctuary.*" *Hitzig* renders, "in His holiness," *i.e.* unapproachableness. But obviously a locality is implied, perhaps the earthly temple, or perhaps the



heavenly. Some suppose that the word "sanctuary" conveys the idea that God is to be praised on account of His holiness. "*Praise Him in the firmament of His power.*" "The phrase," says *Alexander*, "is to be taken as comprehending the hosts of heaven, both animate and inanimate, material and spiritual."

Ver. 2.—"*Praise Him for His mighty acts.*" Probably His acts of deliverance, such as the exodus of the Jews from Egypt and subsequent deliverance from Babylonian captivity. "*Praise Him according to His excellent greatness.*" Or His exceeding greatness, or abounding greatness.

Ver. 3.—"*Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet.*" Or with the blast of the horn, the curved horn, not the straight silver trumpet as in Numbers x. The trumpet was used as our church bells are employed to assemble people together for religious devotions. "*Praise Him with the psaltery and harp.*" Or with the lute and harp.

Ver. 4.—"*Praise Him with the timbrel and dance: praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.*" "The three great classes of instruments are here distinctly mentioned, namely—wind, string, and pulsatile. The

last represented by the drum or timbrel, still called by a kindred name in Arabic, is here accompanied by its inseparable adjunct dancing, which might seem misplaced in a list of instruments, and those employed in sacred music, but for the peculiar usages and notions of the ancient Hebrews with respect to this external sign of joy. The common version of the last word, '*organ*,' is derived through the Vulgate from the Septuagint, where it denotes a system or combination of pipes. The Hebrew word, according to the Jewish tradition, means a simple pipe, and is so rendered in the Prayer Book version. It here represents the whole class of wind instruments." —*Alexander*.

Ver. 5.—"*Praise Him upon the loud cymbals: praise Him upon the high sounding cymbals.*" "There were two kinds of cymbals: a species of small metal castanet of high-pitched tones, and another kind consisting of two large plates attached to each hand of the performer." —*Jennings and Lowe*.

Ver. 6.—"*Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.*" "Literally the whole of breath, *i.e.* all living beings. Compare Gen. ii. 7; Deut. xx. 16; Josh. x. 40.

The last verse of the Psalter is a summons addressed no longer to Israel only, but to the whole

of the creation, human and animate, to unite in the praise of Jehovah."—*Canon Cook*.

**HOMILETICS.**—The grand subject of this Psalm, like the majority of the compositions in the Psalter, is **WORSHIP**, a subject this involving at once the supreme *duty* and the supreme *happiness* of man. From it we learn three things concerning worship:—

**I.**—ITS SPIRIT IS EXULTATION. The Lord is to be praised in music, and music is the language of jubilation. Worship is not a mechanical service, not a ceremonial observance, not an irksome duty,—its inspiration is not sadness, its moods are not sombre, its tones are not dolorous,—it is a song, a joyous anthem. Every element involved in worship is an element of joyousness. Is there gratitude in it? Yes, gratitude of the highest type and degree, and gratitude is an element of joy. Is there admiration in it? Yes, admiration of supreme excellence, and the mind admiring beauty, whether artistic or natural, physical or moral, is the mind in rapture. Is adoration in it? Yes, adoration of the most transcendent order, the adoration of ineffable excellence, and the mind adoring is the mind in ecstasy. Talk not of worship as a means to heaven, it is heaven itself.

"O sure it were a seemly thing,  
While all is still and calm,  
The praise of God to play and sing,  
With trumpet and with psalm."—*Alexander Hume*.

Another thing suggested in this Psalm concerning worship is—

**II.**—ITS REASON IS SUPREME. Why should God be praised?

First: Because of His works. "*Praise Him for His mighty acts.*" How great His acts in creation! "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." But His "*mighty acts*" here refer to His deliverances of men. But His mere mightiness is not of itself a reason for worship. Were that mightiness arbitrary or malignant in its operations, who could worship Him? But it is *Love* that prompts the efforts and nerves the arm of Omnipotence. His "*mighty acts*" are acts of beneficence. He should be praised—

Secondly: Because of His transcendent excellence. "*Praise Him according to His excellent greatness.*" How great is God! Great in His natural attributes,—all-powerful and all-wise. Great in possessions,—the universe is His property, material and spiritual. Great in moral perfections,—all-holy, all-loving, all-good. Truly "God is great and we know Him not." Surely the Supremely Great should be supremely revered, adored, and served. Another thing suggested in this Psalm concerning worship is—

III.—ITS OBLIGATION IS UNIVERSAL. He is to be praised in "*His sanctuary,*" in "*the firmament of His power.*" All inanimate nature is called upon to praise Him,—sun, moon, and stars.

"For ever singing as they shine,  
The hand that made us is Divine."

All living creatures are to praise Him. "*Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord.*" All sentient and all rational life, that moves according to the laws of its nature, is ever praising its Maker.

"How often from the steep  
Of echoing hill or thicket have we heard  
Celestial voices to the midnight air  
Sole, or responsive each to other's note  
Singing their great Creator?"—*Milton.*

CONCLUSION.—With these remarks on this Psalm I close my Homiletic Sketches on this portion of Holy Writ. In doing so I am impressed—

First: With the kindness of God. When I undertook this work I had not the slightest idea that I should ever have been able to finish the undertaking. When a Doctor of theology and a voluminous theological author, urged me to it, nearly twenty years ago, in the presence of a publisher (who offered a handsome sum if I would undertake it) I unhesitatingly declined it, as beyond both my capabilities and the probable measure of my life to accomplish. In order, however, to supply the "*Homilist*" with materials for ministerial help I began with a sketch on the

first Psalm, and continued month after month and year after year, until now the work is accomplished in three large volumes.\* He who urged me to commence it has long been in his grave, and many other ministerial brethren, who pressed me to the work, have also passed away. But "hitherto the Lord hath helped me." Though the labour involved has been lengthened and arduous, it has yielded me much insight into the Divine Word, and much delight of the higher kind. In closing these sketches I am impressed—

Secondly: With how much may be accomplished by persevering in little efforts. By producing brief and somewhat hasty sketches from month to month, three large volumes have been the result. Majestic mountains are built from atoms, and mighty rivers spring from bubbling brooks. The feeblest man, by doing some little honest piece of work day by day, may ennoble himself and bless his race. Deeply conscious am I of the imperfections of these sketches, but the blessed conviction of their invincible honesty, though it has placed me in opposition not only to many popular ideas concerning David and the Psalter, but also to my own predilections, somewhat sustains me under the heavy responsibility I have contracted in having undertaken such a momentous work.

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

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"We ought to remove an error the instant we detect it, although it may be out of all competence to state and establish what is right. A lie should be exposed as soon as born; we are not to wait until a healthier child is begotten. Whatever is evil in any way should be abolished. The husbandman never hesitates to eradicate weeds, or to burn them up, because he may not happen at the time to carry a sack on his shoulder with wheat and barley in it. Even if no wheat or barley is to be sown in future, the weeding and burning are in themselves beneficial, and something better will spring up." *Lucian to Timotheus, in imaginary conversation.*—LANDOR.

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\* The first two volumes are published by Mr. Dickenson, Farringdon Street, and the other will soon appear.



## HOMILETIC SKETCH ON THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

**The Partialness and the Purpose of the Evangelic Record.**

“AND MANY OTHER SIGNS TRULY DID JESUS IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS DISCIPLES, WHICH ARE NOT WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK: BUT THESE ARE WRITTEN, THAT YE MIGHT BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD; AND THAT BELIEVING YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE THROUGH HIS NAME.”—*John* xx. 30, 31.

EXPOSITION: Ver. 30.—“*And many other signs truly did Jesus.*” “The Greek word here for ‘*signs*’ is often rendered miracles, for the miracles of Jesus were all signs indicating the Divinity of their Author.” The signs were not merely those referring to the resurrection, but included, no doubt, all the manifestations of His power both before and after His resurrection. They refer to His whole work. “*Which are not written in this book.*” The evangelical record then of Christ’s life is only partial. It is said in the last verse of the next chapter, “There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.” “This,” says *Dr. Brown*, “is to be taken as something more than a mere hyperbolical expression which would hardly comport with the sublime simplicity

of this writer. It is intended to let his reader know that even now when he had done, he felt his materials so far from being exhausted that he was still running over and could multiply gospels to almost any extent within the strict limits of what Jesus did. But in the limitation of these matchless histories—in point of length and number alike—there is as much of that Divine wisdom which has presided over and pervades the living oracles, as in their variety and fulness.”

Ver. 31.—“*But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.*” “This ‘*ye*’ addresses every reader, to the end of the world. It speaks from John to the person that now reads the words inviting him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and have life through His name. Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. Christ lived, His apostles

preached, and His evangelists wrote that the world might shape its conceptions to the true idea of the Messiah, not as the Emancipator of the nation, but as the Saviour of the world. We have in these

two verses what the best scholars of modern times consider to be a proper summary and ending of the book. The chapter which follows has been considered a later addition."

HOMILETICS.—The subject of this passage is the *partialness* and the *purpose of the evangelic record*.

I.—Its PARTIALNESS. "*Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this Book.*" Christ was a worker;—an intense, a diligent, an unflagging and an unremitting worker. He had a wonderful mission to discharge within a brief space of time. He went about doing good. "The work," He said, "which My Father gave Me to do." "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work." Every day of His was crowded with deeds, and these deeds were "*signs.*"

First: They were "*signs*" of His *superhuman might*. The works ascribed to Him in the Gospels transcend all human power. No man could do the works that He did.

Secondly: They were "*signs*" of His *matchless philanthropy*. All His works were inspired and directed by a love for man that was disinterested, self-sacrificing, and unconquerable.

Thirdly: They were "*signs*" of *unmeasurable possibilities*. What He did were only hints of His infinite productiveness. His works were but the "hiding of His power." But though the works recorded are only a miserably small portion of what He accomplished—(1) They are sufficient for our purpose. They reveal Him as the all-loving and Almighty Saviour. (2) They suggest a wonderful history for future study. Will not all the unrecorded deeds of His which He wrought on earth, as well as all His works since He left the world, be unfolded for our study in the future? Into these things "the angels desire to look." Concerning this evangelic record observe—

II.—ITS PURPOSE. “*These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.*”

First : The facts of His life are written in order to *reveal Him*. They are revelations of His power, His love, His transcendent excellence. The works of a man are *the revelations of himself*. “By their fruits ye shall know them.”

Secondly : They reveal Him in order that *men may believe in Him*. How could they believe in Him of whom they have not heard ? Faith in *Him* is at once the most essential and the most practicable of all faiths. It is easier to believe in a person than in a proposition ; easier to believe in a transcendently good person than in any other.

Thirdly : Men are to believe in Him in order *that they may have the highest life*. “*That believing ye might have life through His name.*” What is the highest life ? *Supreme sympathy with the supremely good*. Men lost this at their fall, and the loss is their guilt and ruin. The mission of Christ is to resuscitate this lost life and to fill souls with the love of God. This is the great moral resurrection that is going on in the world, and which comes, and comes *only* out of faith in Him who is the “Resurrection and the Life.”

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

TROUBLE AND PRAYER.—“As the gathering tempest at first obscures the canopy of heaven, but when the warring winds have discharged the showers the face of nature is more bright, more lovely ; so likewise our affliction darkens for a time and overwhelms us ; but when through the aid of prayer it is exhausted in penitential tears, the soul shines forth in redoubled splendour, and the knowledge of God, unclouded as the sunbeam, illumines the heart.”—*St. Chrysostom*.

VALUE OF RELIGIOUS TEACHING.—“Of all teaching the sublimist is to teach a man that he has a *soul* ; the absolute appropriation of this fact gives life and light to what was before a dull, cold, senseless mass.”—*Carlyle*.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

Doers of God's Word.

Chapter i. 22-25.—“BUT BE YE DOERS OF THE WORD, AND NOT HEARERS ONLY, DECEIVING YOUR OWN SELVES. FOR IF ANY BE A HEARER OF THE WORD, AND NOT A DOER, HE IS LIKE UNTO A MAN BEHOLDING HIS NATURAL FACE IN A GLASS: FOR HE BEHOLDETH HIMSELF, AND GOETH HIS WAY, AND STRAIGHTWAY FORGETTETH WHAT MANNER OF MAN HE WAS. BUT WHOSO LOOKETH INTO THE PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY, AND CONTINUETH THEREIN, HE BEING NOT A FORGETFUL HEARER, BUT A DOER OF THE WORK, THIS MAN SHALL BE BLESSED IN HIS DEED.”

“BE swift to hear the Word of God; avail yourself of every opportunity of making yourself acquainted with the truth which is able to save your souls, be instant in season and out of season, swift to hear the Word of God”; and so, in obedience to the counsel here given, a man becomes a diligent “hearer”: he gives close attendance on the means of grace, never absents himself from the services of the sanctuary. Others may be missed now and then out of their places, but, as for him, his familiar face, his attentive and reverential demeanour, seem to form part of the services; there would be felt to be something amiss if he were not there;—this man is swift to hear. But, and here is the strange thing, he is not one bit the better for all his hearing: his family, his neighbours, his customers, are unable, with all their opportunities, to detect any, even the slightest, influence which the things he hears might be supposed to have upon his life; **Swift to hear:** indeed, to judge by what they see, the things he **is this all?** hears have no connection with the things he does. Years ago he was an insincere man, having little regard for, and, apparently little perception of, the sacredness of truth; he has never missed a sermon since. To-day, at the slightest prompting of self-interest, to screen himself from blame, or to further some scheme, he would, without compunction, say the thing that is not.



Years ago he would profess the sincerest friendship to your face and malign you behind your back,—he is as plausible and as treacherous to-day. Years ago he was busy in all that belonged to the external of the church,—he is as busy to-day; and there is none who would feel more deeply offended and wronged if it were to be hinted that he was not in all respects carrying out the counsel and injunction in spirit as in letter; “let every man be swift to hear.”

The apostle will point out the error and self-deception of the man, he will guard against the abuse of the words and the delusion to which the abuse of the words gives rise. “You are a hearer of the Word, diligent, unremitting; though you have not done anything you have heard—for we take those who know you as your judges here—yet you have a comfortable assurance that you are duly carrying out God’s will? You are deceiving yourself, beguiling yourself with delusions that will not bear the light.” Hearing? That is important only in so far as it is a means to an end; it is labour lost if you stop short of the end. If your hearing is to do you any good, you must *do* something with it, you must gather up what you hear and *make* something of it; the only value of the hearing lies in the doing! A student in the lecture room hearing the prelections of his professor and not exercising his mental powers one bit to think over again, and so to make the teachings his own, would you call him a **Self-deceivers** student? The collector of books who fills his shelves with rare editions, uncut, unread, knowing only their names or titles, would you call him a scholar? The hearer of the Gospel, who listens to the word preached and never preaches it over again to himself, who possesses the books which the Holy Ghost has written, but who never gets beyond the letter of them, would you call that man a Christian? The student, with his note-book open before him, and ready, pencil in hand, “thinks” he is a student; and the mere book-collector, looking round his well-filled shelves, “thinks” he is a scholar; and the hearer of the Gospel, listening to the Word of Truth, “thinks” he is a follower of Christ, “deceiving himself.” “He is like unto a man beholding his natural face,” &c.

In the glass, looking into it, he sees the features of his natural face; in the Word of Truth, hearing it, he discerns his moral complexion, the features of his spiritual countenance, the face of his soul. If he deliberately stands before the glass, or casually glances into it as he passes by, he cannot help seeing his natural face; there may be the dust of a day's journey, or work upon it, what is there he sees: if he deliberately comes where the Word of Truth is to be heard, if it be preached in his hearing, he cannot help getting some glimpse, at least, of his moral features, the complexion and lineaments of his spiritual nature: to hear the Word of Truth is to see ourselves as we are. Wherever a true Gospel sermon is preached, wherever men are reasoned with about "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," wherever sin is condemned, and a Saviour commended, there, as in a glass, men see clearly their moral features. Even with the most careless of hearers there are times when they are pricked to the heart, when they are moved by the persuasions of the truth, when they resolve to pay more attention to their eternal interests; what are these but so many glimpses of themselves in the mirror of the Word? As the man saw his natural face in a glass, they see their moral likeness in the Word.

This man, of whom the apostle speaks, saw his face in a glass, *and went his way*. What a speaking likeness of the mere hearer! All the service through he has been a "hearer," decorous, apparently earnest, catching glimpses, now and then, in the mirror! The service is over, and he goeth his way to his farm, or to his merchandise, the self-same man he was before he came: the sound out of his ears, the meaning is out of his sight, the image and likeness utterly forgotten—straightway he forgetteth. Regrets, feelings of unworthiness, religious longings and desires, all the resolutions and momentary prayers, he goeth his way and forgetteth them all, and the working week-days will find him as unspiritual in heart and mind as if there had been no blessed day of Sabbath rest on which he was allowed to hear the Word that was able to save his soul. If he had allowed it to take hold of his intellect and of his heart, if he had personally appropriated it, feeling its

Who does not  
see  
himself here?

worth and his need, he might have gone away, but he would not have forgotten what he was like,—he would have carried the mirror with him. It is the want of this that does all the mischief; it is the being contented with the mere looking and going away. Observe, this mere looking is not hasty, careless, or indifferent: it is attentive, intelligent, ensuring a considerable knowledge and understanding of the letter of the Word, only it stops short of personal reception, of genuine belief and love. *And so* the man goes away and straightway forgets.

But there is another side to all this, another way of looking into the mirror, with a very different result. “But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein,” &c.

And first, that word “looking”: a different word from that translated “beholding,” in the previous case, denoting a far more intense activity of mind and heart; it means personal and cordial interest, too absorbed in what it is doing willingly to withdraw its gaze. “Beholding” was not a listless, indifferent glance, “looking” is a close, earnest enquiry, knowing the eternal interests involved; “beholding” was more an action of the inquisitive intellect; “looking” is more that of the sensitive conscience and of the affectionate heart. **Looking more than Beholding.** Indeed, “looking” is far too weak a word for what the apostle would be at; poring over, peering into, at the risk of hurting the eye-sight, would come nearer his meaning. The man, of whom he now speaks, has the mirror lying before him; he is bending over it, absorbed in the contemplation of what he sees in it; he has no eyes for anything else but what is clearing itself more and more to his vision; he is stooping *over* and he is looking into the perfect law of liberty. It is the same word which is used of the disciples, who, when they came to the sepulchre of our Saviour, stooped down, bent down, peered into the yet darkened place where their Lord had lain; it is the same word which is used of the all-absorbing interest which the angels have in that same death and resurrection—“which things they desire to look into,” bending down with keen desire to know the mystery.

The man who looks into the perfect law of liberty with a look

of this kind will not soon withdraw his gaze: he does not go away, he "continueth therein," fascinated by what he sees, hopes and fears alike excited, all the motives by which an earnest man is moved called forth; he bends over it, and "he continueth therein." What is the result? He has looked into the perfect law of liberty till it has absorbed his whole thoughts: what is the result? He utters his thoughts: he *does* what he has *heard* into a poem which touches all hearts by its pathos and purity, which sounds depths in the human heart unfathomed before! In another region of life and work you would call such a man a *poet*, a *heaven-born* genius; is it just or fair to call this one a mere enthusiast? Are ye not unjust judges who call the man who broods over his own thoughts till he must, and does, give

**The Doer.** utterance to them a *poet*, a *doer*, a *maker*, while ye refuse the like name, the like reality, to him who broods over God's thoughts till he is constrained to make them the living principle of his life, so that it is no more he himself that liveth so much as it is Christ that liveth in him? Why should it be a thing incredible with you that a man shall so listen to the Word of God, shall be so absorbed in it, that he shall be able to give himself no rest till he shall have *done* that *hearing* into a far nobler poem than ever poet sung; a poem incarnate, poetry inspired and alive through every fibre of its being? Was not Milton's *Life* the grander poem? and just because he did this very thing, because he looked into this perfect law of liberty and saw there, and from his youth acted up to what he saw, that only as he made the very purity itself the principle of his life could he be a Doer, a Poet? The Greeks, with their wonderful insight into the meaning of things, seeking a word to designate the poet, called him a doer, or maker; the word which the apostle here uses for a *doer* is the word the Greeks used for a *poet*: reality being the attribute common to both, earnest brooding over what is *heard* till it be *done*!



## Germes of Thought.

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### Christ's Completed Work.

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"WHEN JESUS THEREFORE HAD RECEIVED THE VINEGAR, HE SAID, IT IS FINISHED: AND HE BOWED HIS HEAD, AND GAVE UP THE GHOST."—*John* xix. 30.

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It is remarkable how in Christ's case the ruling passion was strong in death. His great object on earth was to fulfil the work God had given Him to do. And His last thought and last words referred to that—"It is finished!"

[References to this finishing; showing how faithful Christ was to His mission. He ever kept before Him the work He had to do. Thus—*John* xvii. 4; iv. 34; vi. 38; ix. 4.]

And since we have to walk in His steps, His life and that dying word present these lessons. First: Our faithfulness in things temporal; do all things with thy might. Secondly: Our faithfulness in things spiritual; loving God ourselves, and leading others to Him. And thus in our last hours we should make the proud, yet calm confession,—“It is finished!”

To know the full meaning of these words we must notice—

I.—WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S MISSION ON EARTH.

1. *He came on earth to declare and reveal to men the will of God.* The need of that declaration is in man's extreme ignorance; witness the tendency to idolatry of untaught men. How much can man know intuitively? Very little. He depends almost entirely on revelation. And Christ came to explain previous revelations, and make a new one, expressing thus the Father's determination toward mankind. He came to declare the will of God concerning *the present and future life*. How He did this; observe His teachings, for they show the duties of the present life, the relationship that subsists between mortals and their God, and open out many mysteries of the future state.

2. *He came as a prophet.* To what purpose? That He might

foretell the future; *e.g.* how God would deal with rebellious sinners and receive the repentant one, thus leading men Godward by warning and by hope.

3. *He came, further, as our example.* The benefit of an example; the easiness of imitation, as laid against the difficulty of living by abstract principles. How the child learns most readily. Christ's example perfectly displayed. Men were safe when following either His words, or thoughts, or deeds; and these were so thoroughly put before men that the Saviour could truthfully say,—“It is finished!”

4. *But the main purpose of Christ's mission to earth was to make atonement for sin.* The apostle, writing to the Hebrews, says, “Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” To copy another's words, this means to put away “the whole evil in the world through the fall; both the nature and the consequences of sin, the root and fruits, the guilt and the power; the first by the sacrifice on the cross, the second by the power of His Spirit.” Christ could look at each of these objects, and truthfully say,—“It is finished!” (Eph. ii. 13, &c.)

## II.—THE SATISFACTION AT THAT LAST HOUR WAS GREAT.

And yet—

1. *There was but little apparent result.* A few followers; here and there a grateful heart for the wonder worked upon the weakened frame, or the spirit redeemed from devil-thralldom and made subject to God; twelve disciples; a few frail women, &c. But what are these among so many?

2. *Placed against this the combined hatred of Pharisees and Scribes;* the scorn of the Roman governor; the sceptical, mocking Herod; the brutal outcry of the rabble; and almost every Jew saying, “We have”—not this man—but “Abraham to our father.” More than this, a wide world held fast in pagan bonds, or the dark philosophies of the East, or the savagery of African wilds.

3. *What then? How could Christ truthfully utter those dying words?* But God's measure of results differs so from man's. Man takes up the little details one by one, and, as he examines, he forgets to measure how each detail is fraught with mighty

power, which God has force enough to develop infinitely. Man forgets also, that when once the leaven of Godliness is fairly put into the world, its influence will surely spread far and wide. The God-mind of Christ could comprehend this; and His prophetic power displayed the vision of the sure and steady leavening of good throughout a world of sin. And therefore the words,—“It is finished!”

III.—EXPERIENCE GROWINGLY REVEALS THE TRUTH OF CHRIST'S LAST WORD.

To-day we can see how old things are fast passing away, and all things are becoming new. We can understand now how thoroughly Christ felt He had done His work; how He had fixed in this naughty world the leaven that must work its way. The movement of the times is hastening on the consummation when all the nations of the earth shall own to God's supremacy. We can see the almost effete Judaism. The law had been man's school-master; but it only led up to Christ. And ever after Christ took His stand as a Teacher of complete principles. Speculation is growing desperate, having been compelled from time to time to stand aside in order to make room for a growing certainty. All points to the grand completion of the work of Grace.

But of all things that make men's hearts bound at the utterance of this dying word, we feel how thoroughly our mode of access to God was made complete. Now we depend not on priests and costly sacrifices. We depend on no expensive and temporal propitiation, or on the measured words of some interceding, and it may be indifferent, priest. We ourselves come henceforth boldly to the throne of grace and plead with God. None stands between us and our God, but that great, loving Mediator, who, having borne our sins, pleads in fullest confidence, and makes the pardon sure to every repentant sinner.

We thank God to-day for that word of victory. We thank Him because nothing hinders us from the inheritance of the saints but our own unwillingness.

But how many of us can face death and say what that dear Saviour said? What has been the manner of our life? Has it

been diligent? Have we been ever about God's business? So many men to-day seek first the things of this life, and the care bestowed on God and divine things has been but trifling. Have we been faithful to our trust when once we have taken God's work in hand? How much of our life has been devoted to God and to His creatures? Have we souls for our hire? Have we benefited the world morally and spiritually? Some, perchance, have proved stumbling-blocks, and thus have helped to mar the great work of good in a sorrowing and still darkened world.

Thoughts like these roll in upon us while we stand before the cross and hear the Saviour's dying word. May we in our last hour echo in its truthfulness that cry of victory,—“It is finished!”

GOMERSAL, LEEDS.

ALBERT LEE, F.R.G.S.

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### The Ministry of Pain.

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“NOW NO CHASTENING FOR THE PRESENT SEEMETH TO BE JOYOUS, BUT GRIEVOUS: NEVERTHELESS AFTERWARD IT YIELDETH THE PEACEABLE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS UNTO THEM WHICH ARE EXERCISED THEREBY.”—*Hebrews* xii. 11.

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THE ministry of pain and mystery of suffering cannot be satisfactorily explained apart from the teaching of the Holy Scriptures; and *faith*, rather than reason, must make the enquiries and accept the conclusions. No suffering seems good, or can be joyous simply in the light of the present. We naturally shrink from and endeavour to avoid pain. We feel it to be not only the *concomitant*, but the *consequence* of sin. The Bible has been given us to show how sin may be removed, death abolished, and suffering sanctified. The apostle, in this chapter, placed affliction before the Hebrews in the right light. He showed how good and holy men are made heroic and perfect by the severe drill and discipline of life; and how God educes good out of seeming evil. There is a noteworthy honesty in the



statements of Scripture about pain ; it nowhere speaks lightly of it, except in comparison with the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" that will follow for all who are found firm and faithful unto death. The text suggests the following train of thought—

I.—THAT EARTHLY DISCIPLINE IN ITSELF IS A PAINFUL TEACHER. The statement of the apostle is very broad, "No chastening," &c. Universal observation and experience confirm the statement, for everywhere progress and perfection are the outcome of strife and sorrow. *In Creation* what birth-throes and convulsions preceded the production of cosmos out of chaos. And, year after year, what severe discipline nature passes through ; stern winter, with its ice and snow ; the other seasons, with their stormy winds and deluging rains ; sternness and severity seem predominant in nature, and always pervade, more or less, her laws and influence. *In Providence*, God has seen fit to educate and elevate our race by discipline that in itself seemed grievous. Look at the lives of representative men mentioned in Scripture, at the history of nations that have risen to eminence and renown. Look into our own experiences, losses, crosses, afflictions, bereavements, these things are not joyous in themselves. The sorrow of repentance, the agony that springs from doubt, the dismay awakened by difficulties, failures in attempts for complete conquest over self and sin ; these things are painful and cast deep dark shadows over the pathway of life. This is why, looked at in the light of the present only, persons have contended that life is not worth living ; they have pronounced the present existence as *empty*, as a *mystery*, and *mockery*. As things seem in the present, the Pessimist has the better side of the argument ; but, looked at in the light of the "afterward" the Optimist gains the day. This life, then, is a state of trial, a period of probation ; we are at school, and have many hard lessons to learn, and many painful experiences to pass through ; the condition has been imposed upon us by our Creator, who is too wise to err and too good to be unkind.

II.—THAT EARTHLY DISCIPLINE REQUIRES FOR ITSELF OBEDIENT SCHOLARS. Some are *exasperated* by the chastisements of the

Almighty ; some *despise* them ; some *despair* under them ; some *rebel* against them ; in all such instances the design of chastisement is frustrated. It requires that persons shall become "exercised thereby," for only by *docility* and *resignation* can benefit ensue. The beneficent designs of the ministry of pain are thwarted unless we are willing to be drilled by seemingly adverse and mysterious Providences. There is nothing meritorious in pain ; and chastisement, by itself, may harden instead of soften the heart. It is *useless* as well as *impious* to despise or resist the drill we are called upon to undergo. We cannot, if we would, escape it, for "man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward ;" every lot has its crook, and every back its burden. We cannot beat a retreat from life as if we had never been, nor can we alter the *terms* and *conditions* of our probationship. An ordinary scholar in school does not expect to dictate to his master, to pick and choose what he shall learn ; if he desires to improve and prepare for after life, he sets himself resolutely and resignedly to make the efforts, however painful they may be, by which alone the desired end may be attained. So must we, as scholars in the school of life, set ourselves *resolutely* and *resignedly* to be exercised by the plans and purposes of our Father who is in Heaven. Our *thoughts* and *feelings*, our *faith*, *hope*, and *love*, all our powers of mind and soul must be exercised and brought into subjection to the mind of Christ. We must be exercised till the purpose of our probation is accomplished, and we become "meetened for the inheritance of the saints in light."

III.—THAT EARTHLY DISCIPLINE, THOUGH A PAINFUL TEACHER, IMPARTS TO OBEDIENT SCHOLARS THE MOST VALUABLE LESSONS. "Yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness." The storms of winter and showers of spring yield the beauty of summer and fruits of autumn ; the fierce refining fire yields the pure and shining gold. The surgeon's knife and physician's bitter draughts, yield recovery to wonted health ; painful tasks yield prizes and renown. In the moral, as well as natural government of God, the same laws obtain, and the "afterwards" explains what is mysterious, and seems unnecessary or unkind now. Sanctified chastisement brings about (a) *A right state of heart.* The

*passions and feelings* assume a right attitude towards God. There is righteousness in the soul, harmony with the Divine will, and a growing likeness to the Divine character: the end of earthly discipline is attained, viz., the creation of a clean heart and the renewal of a right spirit. There is peace within, even "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," every *rival and rebel* thought subdued, murmuring passions hushed. It brings about (b) *A right state of life*. The right state of heart will yield "*fruits*" in the outward deportment, there will be consecration of all the energies of the soul to Christian work and worship. The fruits of holy living will redound to the glory of God, as well as witness to the reality of the change that has been wrought within us.

CONCLUSION.—Let us not murmur that we are subject to chastisement in the present life. Pain has a *merciful though mysterious* ministry for man. *It restrains the wrong-doer, calls attention to injury and disease, awakens reflection and resolution in the prodigal, turns men's thoughts to Heaven for sympathy and succour, humbles the proud, reconciles to, as well as leads to preparation for, departure to the world where there will be no sorrow and no more pain.* Let us not murmur if we are called upon to suffer for others. The law of vicarious suffering runs through all creation, and the Son of God endured the unutterable agony of the Cross *for us*. It is through suffering we are sanctified and saved. There is no other way of resignedly enduring the chastisements of the present life but by having *respect to the "afterwards."* Pain and sorrow, in themselves, can only work death, but when associated with the merciful designs of our Heavenly Father, they yield life and joy. We enter into the kingdom of Heaven through much tribulation, and the pains of the present may be the prelude and preparation for the endless rest of the future; for it was said concerning the multitude which John saw in apocalyptic vision before the throne, "These are they who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

CLIFTON.

FREDERICK W. BROWN.

## Light.

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“I AM COME A LIGHT INTO THE WORLD THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH ON ME SHOULD NOT ABIDE IN DARKNESS.”—*John* xii. 46.

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IN Scripture we are taught to look upon God as light. He is the Source of light. Wherever there is light we put our finger there and say, God is here. A step further and we find that although all light comes from God, yet the gift of light has been of various degrees. Spiritual light is God's revelation of Himself, and that revelation has been a *progressive one*. In *Job* xi. 7 it is written—“Canst thou by searching find out God?” These are words addressed to one who with his natural powers was grappling with the great problems of life. This is the *first degree of light*—God's revelation of Himself in nature. Ages afterwards we find another man writing thus—“Now we see through a glass darkly” (1 Cor. xiii. 12). Times are changed; Paul enjoys a higher light than Job, for Christ, the Light of the World, had appeared. This is the *second degree of light*—God's revelation of Himself in Christ. But great though Paul's privilege was, he longed for something higher and better. Seeing through the glass did not content him, he looked forward with prophetic gaze to a time when he should see “face to face,” and know as he was known. This is the *third degree of light*—God's revelation of Himself in perfect light of Heaven. Glance at these three in succession.

### I.—FIRST DEGREE—THE LIGHT OF NATURE.

1. God revealing Himself in nature all around us. Just as Christ hid Himself from the people of Jerusalem (*John* xii. 36), so God has hidden Himself in nature. “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter” (*Prov.* xxv. 2). There was a time when the beauties of nature, which now lie around us as *facts*, only existed in the Divine mind as *thoughts*. Do we not learn from them God's power, majesty, wisdom?



2. God reveals Himself in human consciousness. In the reason of man we find the intelligence of God; and in the conscience of man God is revealed as the Moral Governor.

How great the revelation from this light; but how great likewise are the mysteries. The problem of death—"If a man die shall he live again? The problem of sin—"God may be able to forgive sin, but I do not see how;" the problem of moral inequalities—virtue vanquished and vice triumphant.

## II.—SECOND DEGREE—THE LIGHT OF REVELATION.

1. Dimly through types and shadows. The full light too strong for man's eyes. From darkness into strong light is too great a transition, and so God's revelation gradual, dimly veiled.

2. Clearer revelation in Christ. In the fulness of time Christ came. The Word of God, the expression of the Father's heart. Only "fulness of time," however, not *fulness of revelation*; that not yet. But we have learned enough. Christ has revealed infinite love ready to forgive and restore fallen man. He has revealed the fact that infinite goodness is at the heart of things, and that the Almighty and Eternal One reigns on the throne of the universe.

Where are the problems of death and sin? Here yet? Not yet thoroughly clear. Besides, the stronger light has brought other mysteries within the range of our vision. The mystery of Godliness—God incarnate—"God manifest in the flesh." The mystery of redemption—the problem of forgiveness. It will not do to say, *Christ's death*. That only pushes the problem a stage further back, and leaves the solution still a mystery.

III.—THIRD DEGREE—THE LIGHT OF HEAVEN. Now we see through a glass darkly; then we shall see face to face. Light will come to us through no medium, we shall be in the day, we shall *live in the light*. What revelations there will be then! Dark dispensations of Divine providence, dark corners of self, unexplored regions of our being, dark mysteries of Divine government, will then spring into significance, just as the landscape does under the magic power of the sunlight. Then we

shall be in more direct contact with the Source of life. If so, then there will follow—

1. *Greater vitality.* Difference between Tropics and Arctics. Nearer sun.

2. *Increased rapidity of growth.* Conditions of life changed. Illustrate by the forcing of plants.

3. *Greater capacity for development.* Memory developes with use, strength increases as it is rightfully expended, capacity for growth increases with the increase in development.

Where are earth's mysteries? Gone. Like the mists before the sun. Then there are no mysteries in Heaven? Who shall say? But I cannot help thinking that the mysteries of Heaven will be greater than the mysteries of earth. I cannot help believing that the secrets which that day will reveal, shall only be equalled by the secrets which the intensified light will, for the first time, bring within the range of our vision. Heaven will have its mysteries, only I cannot think there will be any perplexity there. Earth's mysteries perplex, and there the sting lies. That one characteristic of earth's problems will be wanting in Heaven's problems. So we shall go on making new discoveries in Divine grace and truth; growing, developing, beautifying in the presence of our Lord.

EDINBORO.

F. K.

## The Great Teacher.

“LEARN OF ME.”—*Matthew xi. 29.*

MAN is not only guilty but also ignorant, therefore he needs a Teacher as well as a Priest. Our text recognizes this. The words suggest two topics:—

I.—THE TEACHER. What are His claims?

1. *He has no claim to a hearing upon worldly grounds.*

(a) He was of humble birth.

(b) Of a lowly calling.

- (c) Had no special culture.
- (d) Was not a traveller of repute.
- (e) Nor did He live where the wisdom of this world was at its best.

2. *We are, therefore, prepared to accept the claim of divinity for His teaching.*

- (a) This He claimed Himself.
- (b) And it was claimed for Him by His contemporaries.
- (c) His manner as a Teacher corroborated these claims.
- (i.) His catholicity.
- (ii.) His compassion.
- (iii.) His authority.
- (iv.) His infallibility.

## II.—THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS TEACHING.

1. *It is characterized by an elevation above the wisdom of this world.* For instance—

- (a) He teaches no secular science.
- (b) Nor human philosophy.
- (c) Nor much to help us in the externals of life.

2. *But it is characterized by its bearing upon the higher nature of man.*

- (a) His relations to God.
- (b) To the Divine law.
- (c) To the redemption from sin.
- (d) To the endless advance in righteousness.

CONCLUSION.—1. *What a dignity is here put upon human nature.* It may learn of Him. It has susceptibilities to His God-like touch!

2. *See the intrinsic value of the human soul.* God esteemed it worth the teaching of Incarnate Wisdom.

3. *How deep are the responsibilities of those who turn away from Him who speaketh from heaven.*

4. *What incentives to learn are here before us!* Christ Himself says, "Learn of Me."

## Seedlings.

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### Days of the Christian Year.

John xv. 27.

(Sunday after Ascension.)

"AND YE ALSO SHALL BEAR WITNESS (OF ME) BECAUSE YE HAVE BEEN WITH ME FROM THE BEGINNING."

THE previous verse (twenty-sixth) shews that our Lord was speaking of the testimony which His apostles should bear *concerning Himself*, and the words of the text suggest that (1) *Their early fellowship with Him specially fitted them to testify of Him to the world.* Christ is more to Christianity than any other teacher is to the faith he taught,—than Confucius is to Confucianism, or Mahomet to Mahommedanism. That which, above all things, the world wants to know is, What did Jesus of Nazareth say, what was His spirit, what was His life at all points and and, under all circumstances? What *was* He, in all the unfoldings of His work, and in all the depths of His spiritual nature? Only they who were "with Him from the beginning," and had seen Him in solitude as well as in public, "in undress" as well as on great occasions, could tell us

this. (2) *The witness they would bear to Christ would be a fitting recompense for faithful service.*

Evidently our Lord loved His disciples deeply; and the services which they rendered Him in forsaking all to follow Him (Mark x. 28), as well as in ministering unweariedly to His wants and sharing His privations, had endeared them to His heart. "Ye are they," said He, "who have been with Me in My trials, and I appoint unto you a kingdom." What kingdom was this? Even the same as His own? "Art thou a king then?" . . . "Thou sayest. . . To this end was I born, . . . that I might bear witness to the truth" (John xviii. 37). This was the noble, the regal life they were to live—meet recompense for faithful service,—they were to bear witness unto Him who was Himself the Truth. It was a very different reward from that on which they had first set their hearts; but it was immeasurably higher, and vastly more enduring than that. Soon the crown fades, and the sceptre passes into other hands; but "the truth" to which the apostles witnessed, and the influences which



they introduced into the world are living still, and will live as long as the world endures, in the minds, the hearts, the lives, the destinies of men. The lessons we glean from this word of the Master are—

I.—THAT EARLY ASSOCIATION WITH CHRIST BEST FITS US FOR BEARING WITNESS TO HIM IN LIFE. It is not *essential*, or Paul, Augustine, Bunyan, and many another could not have done such witness-work as they accomplished. But they who are with Christ from the beginning are *best fitted* for the sacred mission. (1) *Who are so familiar as they with His Word of Truth?* Timothy was the excellent workman he became largely because “from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures”; the receptive faculties of the young are such that they who begin earliest to learn of Christ understand best what is His mind in the things which are spiritual and Divine. (2) *Who fall so easily into rank as they do, as soldiers in His aggressive army?* Youth is the most pliable, adventurous, versatile period of our life. Age is stiffened, rigid, unaccommodating. Christian youth is likeliest to go forth in fresh enterprises, and do valiant, subduing work for the Great Captain. (3) *They only can render continuous service against which there is nothing to set on the other*

*side.* The man who begins to bear witness in his prime has a long score of evil influences to counteract, a large balance to work off before there is anything to count on the right side. He who has been walking with Christ from the beginning can bless God that *all* his powers and *all* his influence have been devoted to the service of truth and man.

II.—THAT EARLY FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST SHALL MEET WITH A HIGH REWARD. Not to these who walk with Christ from the beginning does He promise wealth, honour, pleasure, fame—the things which perish in their use, or which vanish in a brief space, or which tend to lower and depress the spiritual life. Quite other and far higher is the reward which the Saviour gives, it is the immeasurably precious privilege of bearing witness to Himself—speaking those words, taking that post, living that life, the effect of which is to lead men unto the kingdom of the truth, to bring them into close and vital union with Him who is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”

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## Acts ii. 4.

(Whit-Sunday.)

"AND THEY WERE ALL FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST, AND BEGAN TO SPEAK WITH OTHER TONGUES, AS THE SPIRIT GAVE THEM UTTERANCE."

THIS day of the Lord's coming was the beginning of the dispensation under which we live—that of the Holy Spirit of God. It is well that we should consider,—

I.—THE ESSENTIAL VIRTUE OF THE DIVINE COMMUNICATION. "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." What is it that God does for us when He thus acts upon us? He manifests Himself to us in the "wonderful works" of nature; He speaks to us in the intuitions of our spiritual nature, in the voice of conscience; He sends us messages from heaven in the orderings of His divine providence. He made Himself known to us in Christ Jesus when, in those later times, He "spake unto us by His Son." But there is a way by which He comes into yet closer contact with His human children. He has, in His heavenly wisdom and in His parental love, left a way open between Himself and ourselves by which He can act upon us not indirectly, but directly, not mediately, but immediately; this is by the gentle, gracious, efficient action of His

own Spirit on our spirit. Thus He "lays His hand upon us" and touches the hidden spring of our thoughts, our feelings, our hopes; thus He not only comes to us, but enters into us, makes our hearts His home; "we are filled with the Holy Ghost." It is surely *natural* that He should do so; most likely, most credible it is that the Infinite Father of mankind should, while giving to His children a large measure of freedom, responsibility, and so of spiritual dignity, hold Himself free to touch, to quicken, to restrain, to incite, to restore, to ennoble. It is surely *desirable in the last degree* that He should do so. Whence, otherwise, should we gain the spiritual force which gives life to the dying, energy to the languishing, sanctity and peace to the stained and struggling spirit?

II.—ITS MANIFESTATIONS. The incoming and indwelling of the Divine Spirit shewed itself, in the case of the apostles on this Pentecostal morning, by "their speaking with other tongues." This manifestation was *remarkable*; it excited a large amount of attention; it was noised abroad, the multitude came together and were confounded, &c. (see verses 6, 7.) It was also *beneficent*; those who came and listened were led to think of the work of God (v. 11),

and to enquire into its meaning (v. 12), they were started on the path of reverent enquiry. These are two of the manifestations of the presence of God's Spirit in us. It will be *abundantly evident* to all that God is with us and in us; our new and nobler life will make that clear, and will not only invite but compel attention. And the influence will be *beneficial*; we shall lead men's thoughts upwards, Godwards. The man who, as the result of his religious excitements and convictions, is not helping to lead men to think more of God and of the things which are divine, may question the depth and reality of his devotion. Quite apart from "other tongues" we shall speak the praises of Him who has called us into His marvellous light.

III.—THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH WE MAY LOOK FOR THE DIVINE OUTPOURING. The disciples, on this occasion, were assembled in the spirit of *devotion* and of *concord*. They were there waiting on God, and were there "with one accord" (ver. 1). It is the spirit of prayerful expectancy in which we are looking up to the Faithful Promiser, and the spirit of brotherly love (Ps. cxxxiii), of Christian charity (Jno. xiii. 34, xv. 12-17; 1 Cor. xiii.; 1 Jno. iii. 10, 11, 23, iv. 7, 8), which will please our Divine Saviour, will

secure His gracious benediction, will draw down the fulfilment of His word (Jno. xiv. 16-18), which will make it true of us that we "are filled with the Holy Ghost."

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### John iii. 7.

(Trinity Sunday.)

"MARVEL NOT THAT I SAID UNTO THEE, YE MUST BE BORN ANEW." (R. V.)

CHRIST'S demand for regeneration is felt to be unquestionable and absolute when we remember that—

I.—He knew what CONSCIENCE CLAIMS. Our Lord knew "what is in man," and hence heard every protest and plea of conscience. Hearing that, discerning that, He knew how often the innermost depth of man was disturbed, ashamed, confounded, when public opinion was very contented with his character; He knew that conscience often condemned when the world applauded. For He saw that so long as the habits of an evil past trammelled the spirit, and the tendencies of an unrenewed nature were dominant, there could be no peace to the conscience. Nothing short of innermost concord between conscience and man's life could give rest; and hence He demands the

change that shall ensure this.  
 "Ye must be born anew."

II.—He knew WHAT IS THE IDEAL OF CHARACTER. He had not only seen it as a vision, but embodied it as an experience. It was not simply in His hand as an architect's plan, it was in His own life as a builder's perfected structure. And knowing how great the change that must pass over men if they would reach that ideal, He says, "Ye must be born anew."

III.—He knew WHAT ARE THE CLAIMS OF THE LAW OF GOD. Coming forth from the bosom of the Infinite King, being indeed Himself the Divine Lawgiver, He discerned the deepest meanings of duty. Not the superficialities but the very central life of righteousness was clear to His eye. No wonder He said "Ye must be born anew."

IV.—He knew what are THE CONDITIONS OF A KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. For not only did He teach the blessedness of the pure in heart who see God, He experienced it in its richest enjoyment.

V.—He knew what HEAVEN IS. Its atmosphere, its tone, its light, its life, and thus to men who would know them He says, "Ye must be born anew."

VI.—He knew the SINFULNESS OF HUMAN NATURE. It made Him sigh, groan, die.

EDITOR.

### Luke xvi. 30, 31.

(First Sunday after Trinity.)

"AND HE SAID, NAY, FATHER ABRAHAM: BUT IF ONE WENT UNTO THEM FROM THE DEAD, THEY WILL REPENT. AND HE SAID UNTO HIM, IF THEY HEAR NOT MOSES AND THE PROPHETS, NEITHER WILL THEY BE PERSUADED, THOUGH ONE ROSE FROM THE DEAD."

THIS parable, like a many-sided lantern, throws its strange light on Riches, on Graves, on Homes, on Heaven and Hell, and, perhaps most important of all, on Repentance. These two verses from it bring before us—

I.—A NEED MOST URGENT. Jesus leads us here to listen to voices from heaven and hell. Great as is the contrast in their tone they concur in declaring that the one great want of men on earth is *Repentance*. (1) *What is Repentance?* A change of mind—of governing disposition—leading to a change of life. This change may be seen sometimes in one act, as the movement of the weather-vane indicates the way of the wind. But the change itself is the result of the work of the mightiest Force of which we have any knowledge—the Breath of God. (2) *Why is this repentance an urgent need?* *Because of the essential condition of happiness.*



Our thoughts must become as God's thoughts, our ways as God's ways, if there is not to be deepest discord, endless war. "Turn ye, turn ye!" This need is urged on us (*a*) by departed souls; (*b*) by the true philosophy of character; (*c*) by the claims and constraining love of Christ. Here is—

II.—A PERVERSITY MOST LAMENTABLE. How common is the perversity the first words of our text utter, viz :—a craving for what we have not, and a neglect of what we have. It is seen in (1) *A neglect of natural talents and a coveting of others.* (2) *A hunger for religious excitements, such as Revivals, Sensationalisms, Spiritualisms, and an ignoring of the ordinary "means of grace."* (3) *An anticipation of special epochs, and an abuse of ordinary opportunities.* "Latter Day," Millennial, and such like hopes.

III.—A CERTAINTY MOST SOLEMN. This is the sad certainty Christ asserts: that if a man neglects what he has, he would not improve what he craves for. This leads us to notice (1) *The sufficiency of the religious privileges we now possess.* Those to whom Jesus was speaking had Moses and the prophets "to bring them

to repentance;" we have also Christ and His apostles; the motives are most varied, the forces are most mighty. For Christ is "the arm of the Lord revealed." (2) *The insufficiency of other means, if those we now have are neglected.* We suggest here (*a*) *It is improbable that if messengers came from the dead that those who rejected Christ would repent.* For (i) Could they proclaim more important truths? (ii) Could they present surer credentials? (iii) Could they approach us in a more faith-inspiring manner? (*b*) *It is morally certain that if such messengers came the rejectors of Christ would reject them.* For (i) Christendom once had the superstition that the dead haunted the living, and yet how crass the practical unbelief of those dark ages. (ii) Men have actually come back from the dead, but we have no record of wide-spread conversions, and awakening to repentance in consequence of their testimony.

Conclusion.—We have all we need. The opportunity: Christ: The Divine Spirit. "All things are now ready." Procrastination is madness: long delay is death.

EDITOR.

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"Among the causes of the evils into which we fall may be reckoned the circumstance of our living by the example of others."—*Seneca.*

## Breviaries.

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### Negative and Positive Goodness.

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"THEY ALSO DO NO INIQUITY : THEY WALK IN HIS WAYS."—*Psalm cxix. 3.*

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HERE we have I.—NEGATIVE goodness. "*They do no iniquity.*" In their external conduct, and to the eye of society, they appear faultless. There is a great deal of this negative goodness in English society. I offer two remarks concerning it. (1) It is *socially valuable*. He who in society practically respects the social rights of others, who is free from falsehood, chicanery, and debauchery is certainly a more valuable man than he who is guilty of all these enormities. (2) It is *morally worthless*. There is no virtue in the not doing of wrong, but there is sin in not doing the right. The young lawyer in the Gospel said to our Lord that he had kept all the commandments. "Yet one thing thou lackest," was the infallible reply. And at last a man is damned, not because he does not do external wrong, but because he does not do the right. "Inasmuch as ye did it not to the least," &c. Old *Thomas Manton* has put this truth in a somewhat striking manner. "*They walk in His ways.*" "It reproves those that rest in negatives. As it was said of a certain Emperor, he was rather *not vicious* than virtuous, so of many men, all their religion runs upon *nots*. 'I am *not* as this publican.' That ground is naught, though it brings not forth briars and thorns, if it yields not good increase. Not only the unruly servant is cast into hell, that beat his fellow servant, that ate and drank with the drunken, but the idle servant that wrapped up his talent in a napkin. Meroz is cursed, not for opposing and fighting, but for not helping. Dives did not take away food from Lazarus, but he did not give him of his crumbs. Many will say, I set up no other gods; aye, but dost thou love, reverence, and obey the true God? For if not, thou dost fail in the first commandment. As to the second, thou sayest, I abhor idols; but dost thou delight in ordinances? I do not swear and rend the name of God by cursed oaths; aye, but dost thou glorify God and honour Him? I do not profane the Sabbath; but dost thou sanctify it? Thou dost not plough and dance, but thou art idle, thou toyst away the Sabbath. Thou dost not wrong thy parents; but dost thou reverence them? Thou dost not murder; but

dost thou do good to thy neighbour? Thou art no adulterer; but dost thou study temperance and a holy sobriety in all things? Thou art no slanderer; but art thou tender of thy neighbour's honour and credit as of thy own? Usually men cut off half their bill, as the unjust steward bade his lord's debtor set down fifty when he owed a hundred. We do not think of sins of omission. If we are not drunkards, adulterers, and profane persons, we do not think what it is to omit respect to God, and reverence for His Holy Majesty." Here we have II.—POSITIVE GOODNESS. "*They walk in His ways.*" To walk in His ways implies three things—First: *Spiritual life*. A dead man cannot walk. Mortality has paralysed the limbs and they move no more. There is no walking in the Divine way unless the soul is quickened into spiritual life—a life of supreme sympathy with God. It implies—Secondly: *Spiritual vigour*. A man may live and yet be too weak in the frame to raise himself from his couch or take one step. The man who walks in the right way has moral vigour—a vigour that grows with every effort. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." "They go from strength to strength," &c. It implies—Thirdly: *Spiritual progress*. A constant advance from one point to another. Every holy volition and aspiration are steps onward. A truly good man is never at the same moral point, he is farther on to-day than yesterday. "He forgets the things that are behind," &c. He enters into new sceneries, new climates, new prospects. "The path of the just is as the shining light," &c.

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

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### The Supreme Calamity.

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"O FORSAKE ME NOT UTTERLY."—*Psalm cxix. 8.*

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UTTER desertion of God is the calamity of all calamities. The language implies I.—The POSSIBILITY of this calamity. What meaneth this? Forsaken of God! It cannot mean any change on God's part in relation to man. (1) Not a change in space. He does not withdraw from one point of space to another. He fills all space at all times. (2) Not a change in relationship. He is always the Father, Sustainer, Judge, &c. (3) Not a change in procedure. He proceeds on His march from age to age for ever without pause or deviation. No; the desertion is on *our* part. God says, "My people have forsaken Me." We forsake Him.

We get into a moral mood or state of soul in which we feel we have lost Him altogether. "*Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!*" When we close our eyes sun, moon, and stars seem to forsake us, but they are there notwithstanding, unaltered. The sun will shine as brightly in his own orbit in the darkest day of December as in the brightest day of June, but not so to us. In the city fogs he seems to have forsaken us. It is we that have forsaken the sun, through exhalations in which we have placed ourselves. So God is the same in Himself whether we be in a fiendish or seraphic mood. In sooth, the whole outward world is to us according to the moral state of our hearts, radiant or dismal, beautiful or hideous, harmonious or discordant. The possibility of God forsaking us in this sense is too obvious to require any proof or illustration. The language implies II.—The TERRIBLENESS of this calamity. "*O forsake me not utterly.*" A consciousness of Divine desertion is the "blackness of darkness," is hell itself. A soul in this state is a star that has lost its centre, rushing into the everlasting tumult and midnight of chaos. It is a state—First: Of *self-orphanage*. Children whose parents have been taken from them by death are objects of commiseration, but those who have run away from their parents, voluntarily left their home and parental care, where the parents are both of loving disposition, and have means to ensure their comfort, are rather objects for denunciation than pity. Sinners are self-orphaned. It is a state—Secondly: Of *unpitiableness*. Human sympathy generally runs more freely towards the motherless and fatherless in social life. Asylums are founded for them, plans and interests are employed for their benefit. But who is to pity a self-orphaned soul? It cannot pity itself, but otherwise,—censure and condemn. Society cannot pity it, for it becomes invested with those moral attributes that create loathing and disgust. "Do not I hate them, Oh God?" &c. Such is the terrible state of the soul that has forsaken its God. The language implies—III.—The ESCAPEABILITY of this calamity. Otherwise, why this cry, "Forsake me not." How is it to be avoided? First: By the cultivation of *supreme sympathy with God*. Our universal antipathy to Him has effected the desertion and driven us away from Him, so that He is not in all our thoughts. It is love alone in the heart that will bring us back to Him and place us in close and happy fellowship with Him. The coming into possession of this love is Biblically represented as regeneration, a conversion, a returning. Hence we are commanded, exhorted, even implored to return to Him. "Let the wicked forsake his ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto Me



and I will have mercy upon him." How is this to be avoided? Secondly: By the *cleansing of the heart of all moral impurity*. It is the atmosphere of depravity that surrounds our hearts that shuts out God from us, as the exhalations of our earth darken and even sometimes conceal our sun. We must have this moral atmosphere of the heart purified. "Create within me a clean heart, O God." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall SEE God."

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

### Terrible Conclusions Resulting from the Denial of Two Great Gospel Facts.

"NOW IF CHRIST BE PREACHED THAT HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD, HOW SAY SOME AMONG YOU THAT THERE IS NO RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD? BUT IF THERE BE NO RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, THEN IS CHRIST NOT RISEN: AND IF CHRIST BE NOT RISEN, THEN IS OUR PREACHING VAIN, AND YOUR FAITH IS ALSO VAIN. YEA, AND WE ARE FOUND FALSE WITNESSES OF GOD; BECAUSE WE HAVE TESTIFIED OF GOD THAT HE RAISED UP CHRIST: WHOM HE RAISED NOT UP, IF SO BE THAT THE DEAD RISE NOT. FOR IF THE DEAD RISE NOT, THEN IS NOT CHRIST RAISED: AND IF CHRIST BE NOT RAISED, YOUR FAITH IS VAIN; YE ARE YET IN YOUR SINS. THEN THEY ALSO WHICH ARE FALLEN ASLEEP IN CHRIST ARE PERISHED. IF IN THIS LIFE ONLY WE HAVE HOPE IN CHRIST, WE ARE OF ALL MEN MOST MISERABLE."—1 Cor. xv. 12-19.

IN this paragraph the apostle refers to two great facts *fundamental* to Christianity, and *peculiar* to it as a system of religion. The one is the *general resurrection* from the dead, and the other is the *resurrection of Christ* Himself. In order to make clear Paul's process of reasoning here I see no better way than to exhibit the conclusions which he draws from the *denial* of these facts. I.—Conclusions resulting from the denial of the GENERAL resurrection of the dead. These conclusions are threefold. First: *The non-resurrection of Christ*. "If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen." If you can demonstrate the impossibility of men coming to life again after they have been buried, then you prove, of course, that Christ has not risen. What is true of the whole is true of all the parts. If no man can rise from the dead, then Christ is still numbered amongst the dead. There were evidently men in the Church at Corinth, who, like the Sadducees, denied the doctrine of a future resurrection. Hence Paul informs them that doing so is tantamount to the denial of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, which fact he had

proclaimed amongst them. Another terrible conclusion which he says results from the denial of this fact is, Secondly : *That departed Christians are no more.* "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." They also as well as others. If dead men do not rise, then our fellow disciples who have departed this life, and who believed in a risen Christ, are no more. Those thousands who, from the day of Pentecost, accepted Christ, lived according to His teaching, and who quitted this world have perished,—can you believe it? Are they quenched in eternal midnight? Another terrible conclusion which Paul says results from the denial of this fact is, Thirdly : *That there is no more pitiable condition in this life than that of Christians.* "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." How many things are implied in this language. It is implied that there are men in a pitiable condition on this earth, it is implied that the pitiable condition exists in different degrees, it is implied that the degree of pitiableness is regulated by hope. Man is always hoping, man is always, therefore, enduring one of the greatest elements of suffering, viz., *disappointment*. It is implied that the hope of a Christian if false will make him, of all men, the most to be pitied. (For an amplification of these points see *Homilist*, vol. xi., page 61.) Of course it is not intended to teach that, apart from the resurrection of Christ, man has no evidence of a future state, nor that on the supposition that there is no future life the practise of virtue is not to be preferred to that of vice. It is implied that the higher the object of our hope, and the more of the soul that goes into it, the more overwhelmingly crushing will be the disappointment. The man who has thrown his whole soul into Christianity, and who reaches a point when he is convinced of its imposture, is at that moment of all "men the most miserable." Observe here, II.—Conclusions resulting from the denial of CHRIST's resurrection from the dead. There are three conclusions here resulting from the denial of this fact. First : *That apostolic Christianity is vain.* "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." It is vain, void, an empty phantom, a worthless fiction. The resurrection of Christ was the foundation stone in the Temple of Paul's teaching. Take that stone away, it and falls and becomes worthless rubbish. But not only is preaching vain and your faith vain, but we ourselves are "false witnesses." We are impostors; can you believe this? What motives have we to impose? The supposition either that they taught falsehood, that the disciples believed falsehood, and that they were "false witnesses," is eternally inadmissible. Hence

Christ did rise from the dead. Another conclusion resulting from the denial of this fact is, Secondly: *That the faith of the disciples was vain.* "Your faith is also vain." What a wreck of faith is involved in the denial of Christ's resurrection. Then (1) Faith in the *credibility of historic testimony* is vain. On what stronger historical testimony can any fact rest than that of the resurrection of Christ? Then (2) Faith in the *accuracy of philosophic deduction* is vain. The rapid progress of Christianity in the Roman Empire in its first stages, and its subsequent influence throughout the world, reveal a mass of phenomena which you cannot account for if you deny the resurrection of Christ. Then (3) Faith in the *moral value of character* is vain. Did a nobler character than Christ's ever exist? And yet if He rose not then is He an impostor. Then (4) Faith in the *righteous government of God* is vain. If a Being so transcendently excellent as Christ is to be crushed for ever in the grave, then where is the justice of Heaven? Verily if our faith in the resurrection of Christ is vain, of what worth is any faith? Another conclusion resulting from the denial of this fact is, Thirdly: *That the followers of Christ are still in their sins.* It is here implied that faith in Christ can alone take men out of their sins. This is a fact grounded on history, consciousness, and the gospel. But the Christians at Corinth were conscious that they had got out of their sins to a certain degree at least. "Such were some of you, but ye are washed," &c. Consciousness, the highest ultimate argument, protested against Paul's statement that they were still in their sins, hence it goes to verify the fact of the resurrection of Christ.

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DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

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### The Resurrection of Christ.

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"BUT NOW IS CHRIST RISEN FROM THE DEAD, AND BECOME THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THEM THAT SLEPT. FOR SINCE BY MAN CAME DEATH, BY MAN CAME ALSO THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. FOR AS IN ADAM ALL DIE, EVEN SO IN CHRIST SHALL ALL BE MADE ALIVE. BUT EVERY MAN IN HIS OWN ORDER: CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS; AFTERWARD THEY THAT ARE CHRIST'S AT HIS COMING."—1 Cor. xv. 20-23.

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THESE verses lead us to contemplate the resurrection of Christ as an established fact, as a significant fact, and as an influential fact. I.—AN ESTABLISHED fact. Paul asserts this fact with a spirit of triumphant certitude. This fact is established, First: On *the testimony of the most*

*competent witnesses.* A competent witness is one who has a thorough knowledge of the facts whereof he affirms, and such an invincible love for truth as would render it impossible for him to misrepresent them. The apostles were witnesses of this type. This fact is established, Secondly : On the very *existence of Christendom.* What gave birth to that domain amongst the peoples of the race called Christendom ? The *Gospel* ; and the truth of the Gospel rests on the resurrection of Christ. This fact is established, Thirdly : On the *consciousness of genuine disciples.* Such consciousness attests that they are “not in their sins,” that they have got more or less free from their thralldom and dominion, and they feel that this deliverance came from the Gospel. These verses lead us to contemplate the resurrection of Christ as II.—A SIGNIFICANT fact. “Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” The reference here is to the “firstfruits” of the harvest which were offered, by the priests, unto the Lord. (See Lev. xxiii. 12-19). Those firstfruits were both an earnest and a sample of the full harvest at hand. Hence Christ’s resurrection was regarded, First : As a *pledge* of the resurrection of those who were dead. As He rose so will all rise. Christ’s resurrection was regarded Secondly : As a *pattern* of the resurrection of those that were dead. The sheaf waved before the Lord was a specimen or sample of what remained in the field to be gathered in. “Our vile bodies shall be fashioned and made like unto His glorious body.” The verses lead us to contemplate the resurrection of Christ as III.—AN INFLUENTIAL fact. “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Between the influence of Adam and that of Christ on the race there is a *resemblance* and a *contrast*. First : A *resemblance*. The resemblance is in its *extensibility*. Though Adam’s influence upon the race is more extensive at present than that of Christ, it is not more *extensible*. It has in it the power of extending over the whole race down through all times, and it will do so. There is, Secondly : A *contrast*. The influence of the one is *destructive*, the influence of the other *quicken*ing. “As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.” If by death, here bodily death is meant, then the idea is that Christ will quicken to life all that have died. But what does it mean, to be *in Adam* and *in Christ* ? There is, at any rate, one sense which we can understand, in which we are in them, that is in the sense of *character*. Without figure, all men live in the characters of others ; children live in the character of their parents, pupils in their masters, the present generation in the preceding. The characters of the



men of past ages constitute the moral atmosphere of existing men. In Adam's character—the character of *selfishness, carnality, unbelief*,—all unregenerate men live to-day, his principles pulsate in all hearts. In the character of Christ, in His *self-sacrificing love, spotless purity, and Godly devotion*, all the godly live to-day. Now those who live in the character of Adam must die, not merely in the sense of the dissolution of the soul from the body, but in the more awful sense of the dissolution of the soul from God; whereas those who live in the character of Christ live by a vital connection with the Eternal Fountain of all life. The influence of Adam's character on the race is destructive, that of Christ's is quickening and restorative. "All shall be made alive." Will there be an universal restoration?

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

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### Entrance Into the Church.

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"I AM THE DOOR: BY ME IF ANY MAN ENTER IN, HE SHALL BE SAVED, AND SHALL GO IN AND OUT, AND FIND PASTURE."—*John x. 9.*

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JESUS Christ, when preaching great truths, generally simplified them by illustrations from common objects. (John iii. 4, 5, iv. 10, x. 11-22.) A door is a very familiar object with which to represent the Lord Jesus.

I.—THE ENCLOSURE. The primary application of the enclosure was the sheep-fold; the spiritual meaning is the Church of Christ. Not the Church in Heaven, but the Church on earth, because: (a) *A fold implies night.* During the night the sheep were kept in the fold to rest. There is no night in Heaven. (Rev. xxi. 25.) There is much darkness on earth. (b) *A fold implies danger.* Frequently the sheep were exposed to dangers when out of the fold. There is no danger in Heaven. (Rev. xxi. 4.) But how manifold and great are the dangers Christ's sheep are exposed to on earth! Examine carefully (1) *The enclosure itself.* The Jewish sheep-fold was sometimes made of hurdles, but frequently of old buildings. Christ's spiritual fold, His Church is an *ancient one*, its history can be traced far beyond the time of the prophets; it is *very ample*, its length and width cannot be measured; and it is *very healthy*. (1 Peter v. 2-4.) (2) In this enclosure *there is a society of priceless value*—a flock. This name was given to the Hebrew people. (Isa. xl. 11; Jer. xiii. 17, xxiii. 2, xxxi. 10.) This name was applied by Christ to His disciples.

"Fear not," &c. (Luke xii. 32.) What a fold and flock are here! Well may we exclaim, "and other sheep," &c. (John x. 16.) II.—THE ENTRANCE. There is a way from the world into this enclosure—Christ is that way; He is "the Door." There was a time when man closed this Door by his sins. It is open (not ajar) now. How near it is, close to us; and so wide that all who desire to enter it can be saved. "By Me if any man enter in." Observe (1) This entrance is *peculiar*. Christ is the Door to the Church, and not the Church the door to Christ. Every secular society, as well as every social combination of men, has its distinctive badge or condition of entrance. The condition on which men enter through "the Door" is very rigid. There must be contrition, confession, and forsaking sin. We must "strive to enter." Observe (2) This entrance is *exclusive*. Many try to enter into the Church of Christ in a wrong way. They will do almost anything but go in through Christ. "Verily, verily" (verse 1). There was only one ark, but one brazen serpent, and there is but one way to Heaven. III.—THE PRIVILEGES ENJOYED BY THOSE WHO ARE ADMITTED. "Shall be saved," &c. Here are three distinct blessings—(1) *Absolute safety*. "He shall be saved." Saved from what? A guilty conscience, the love and dominion of sin, dread of death, and fear of the judgment day. Saved from worldly cares, from the devil who goeth about as a roaring lion, &c. (2) *Perfect enjoyment*. "Shall go in and out." The sheep could come in and out of the fold; in the evening they could go in for protection, and in the morning go out for food. Man has a capacity for sensational enjoyment, for mental enjoyment, for social enjoyment, and for religious enjoyment. Christianity does not lessen but increases our happiness. "If the Son, therefore." (John viii. 36.) (3) *Constant provision*. "And find pasture." Food for the body, mind, and soul. "The Lord is my Shepherd." (Psalm xxiii. 1-3.) CONCLUSION.—How sublimely blessed is the condition of those who are in Christ—safe! free! fed!

ST. ANTHONY.

JOHN WILEMAN.

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### Children's Praise.

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"OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES AND SUCKLINGS THOU HAST PERFECTED PRAISE."—*Matt. xxi. 16.*

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I.—THAT PRAISE IS ACCEPTABLE TO CHRIST. A speechless Christianity, a Christianity that will not utter itself in word and deed finds no acceptance with Him. The very stones would have cried out once if the

praise which was His due had not been given. NOTE: Dumb dogs in the Church and silent prophets among the people are reprov'd here. II.—THAT CHRIST'S STANDARD OF PRAISE IS DIFFERENT TO THAT OF MEN. Finds it (1) *Where they least expected*—babes. (2) *Most easily ignored*. (3) *Least noticeable*. (4) *Most complete and satisfying*. [Example: Poet who never realized his fame until he heard his songs in the street.] The one proof of a universal genius is that it appeals to all classes, to the illiterate, the young, &c. NOTE: Christianity finds its ultimate triumph among the children. Christ died for them; they may be saved. When the children grow up naturally to give themselves to Christ, the millenium cannot be far off. LESSONS: Christ expects the praise of children, looks for it, waits for it, finds His highest joy in it.

LONDON.

WALTER BAXENDALE.

MAN'S ABILITY, A PLEA FOR GOD'S ABILITY.—The kind of things which man can do, God can certainly do; and if modern men of science can modify the operation of nature by methods which, to men not so scientific, would be incomprehensible, and even invisible, certainly God can modify nature and control it by means which, even to men of science, are similarly incomprehensible and invisible."—*Henry Wace*.

REGENERATION OF THE WORLD.—"Underlying all that is misshapen, all dislocations, all discordant elements, all afflictive manifestations, one can yet discern the putting forth of a living energy,—irresistible as that of gravitation, in virtue of which the entire system, in its symmetry, beauty, and splendour, shall one day give back to Heaven what it has thence received."—*Edward Miall*.

GOD AND MAN.—"God stands alike over against all man's powers and capacities, though at times drawing nearer to one side of us than another; and therefore a man must turn his spirit, with all its powers and capacities, perfectly unto God in order not to be estranged from Him."—*Ewald*.

PRECEPT AND PRACTICE.—"Correct opinion and correct conduct act and re-act on one another and are educated and built up together. The maintaining of a high standard has a great power for clearing the vision as well as for regulating the life. 'In God's light we shall see light.'"—*Dean Howson*.

## Pulpit Handmaids.

### NATURAL HISTORY HOMILIES.

#### Leviticus 'xi. 13-19.

In our daily speech we often compare men to animals. To illustrate some trait in his character we call a man by the name of some beast of the field, or bird of the air which has, or is supposed to have, the quality we desire to ascribe to him. He is as surly as a bear, or as fierce as a wolf, or stubborn as a mule, or as cunning as a fox, or as treacherous as a cat, or as revengeful as a wasp, or he is, perhaps, as timid as a hare.

The Bible contains several examples of this kind of symbolism. Ephraim is "a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke." David's enemies are strong "bulls of Bashan." When he would warn the disciples at Philippi against certain false teachers, Paul says:—"Beware of dogs." And our Lord himself, who knew so well what was in man, addressed certain Jews in these terms:—"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers."

Out of several fowls here pronounced unclean by the Levitical law I shall select a few, and will treat of them as *types of character*. I will not discuss the reasons adduced why these various animals were not allowed to be eaten by the Hebrews; but I would suggest, with many of the Commentators, that, perhaps, one reason why they were forbidden was that they had qualities which God wished His people to hold in abomination. He desired the chosen race to shun certain well-known characteristics of these birds. They were not to be Vulture-like, or Owl-like, or Bat-like. On this supposition I will treat of the subject, and may the Holy Spirit help us, so that, from this seemingly unpromising field, we may reap an abundance of wholesome and practical teaching

### IX.—THE RAVEN.

"And these ye shall have in abomination among the fowls; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: . . . every *Raven* after his kind."—verses 13, 15.

The Raven is often confounded with the carrion crow; but it is an entirely different bird. It is larger, blacker, more sagacious, and, while the crow is gregarious in its habits, the Raven is solitary, and to be met with only in pairs. It is also a stronger and bolder bird. A pair of Ravens will descend without fear among a flight

of crows, drive them from the carrion, and feast themselves, while the crows are looking on at a distance.

I take SELFISHNESS to be the leading characteristic of the Raven. It has no pity and no generosity. With it "*No. 1*" is the only number. It has not only no concern, but it has no liking even for anything beyond its own gratification. It must have all to itself; and leaves nothing but what it cannot make serviceable to its own delectation.

(1) *God did not mean man to be like the Raven.* He said,



"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." The leading quality in God was to be the leading quality in man. "God is love." *The happiness of the creature, like the happiness of the Creator, was to be in giving, and not in receiving.* Men were to be as gods to each other, dispensing goodness and happiness to the uttermost of their resources. (Rom. xv. 1; 1 Cor. x. 24; Gal. vi. 2.)

(2) *What happiness, thus did God intend for the human race?* "As days of heaven upon earth" would have been this life of man had it been fashioned throughout on the Divine model. Nothing to hurt or destroy could ever enter a society in which love held undisputed sovereignty. "Its ways are ways of pleasantness; and all its paths are peace." (Acts ii. 44-47.)

(3) *But the unhappy revolt of man from God, and his assertion of independence, effectually prevented the accomplishment of the Divine purpose.* The relation of dependence which God had established between man and man, in order to give scope for the exercise and to pro-

mote the development of his benevolence, became the occasion of opposition and conflict in the human family. It was impossible that man could be his own deity without sacrificing the interests and happiness of his fellows.

(4) You will perceive from these remarks that *selfishness is at the bottom of man's apostacy.* Man started with the idea of supplanting God—of being his own deity; and each several sin of his life is reducible into an attempt on the throne of God. These various sins are but the various devices of the human heart for prosecuting the war which has been declared by man against his Creator. (Phil. ii. 21.)

(5) *Before, therefore, the mischief effected by the fall of man can be adequately repaired, we must find that which will destroy the selfishness of man's heart.* It is not this or that sin which wants to be eradicated—it is not avarice, drunkenness, sensuality, or any one of the manifold forms of iniquity that we have to battle against, but selfishness—the root sin—"the mother of abominations." Attempts to restore our

primal purity and bliss, which do not affect the seat of the disease can only issue in failure. Unless the heart is made right, brought to submit itself to God, nothing is made right. "Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

(6) *The Gospel of Jesus Christ, alone of all religious systems, has recognised this important fact, and proposed to remove the disorder by removing the cause.* We are taught in Scripture to pray, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." And we are assured that in answer to our petition, the stony heart shall be taken away from us and we shall receive a heart of flesh, and that God will bestow upon us His spirit. (2 Cor. v. 15.)

The means proposed in the Gospel for this renewal is the love of God disclosed in His plan of redemption, and apprehended by us in the power of the Holy Ghost. "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy . . . . He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." When we had

incurred His displeasure, and might have looked for His vengeance falling upon our heads, we were called upon to witness a transcendent act on our behalf of the Divine benevolence. "For God sent not His Son," &c. The Cross of Jesus, as exhibiting to mankind the clemency of offended Deity, is the means whereby God would overcome the enmity of the human heart to Himself, and replace it with love. With love He would constrain love. With mercy He would quicken those dead in trespasses and sins to newness of life. (1 John iv. 19; Ephes. ii. 4, 5.)

(7) *The sufficiency of this remedy for man's disease has received abundant proof.* It is impossible for any candid mind to deny that the Gospel has, in thousands and millions of cases, effected a radical change in men's sentiments, and disposition, and character.

(8) *The early Christian Church affords us just such a spectacle of unselfish enthusiasm on behalf of the race as we would have anticipated from the renewal of men's hearts, and the restoration to them of the lost principle of*

*benevolence.* The disciples burned to dispense the bounty which had been entrusted to them for behoof of their fellow men. Having freely received they must freely give. The change in their attitude towards God was concurrent with a change in their attitude towards the rest of mankind. They could not love God and hate their brother. As Christ gave Himself for the world, so would they give themselves for the world. They were brought into entire sympathy with the mind of Christ, and were prepared to suffer the loss of all things—of life itself if need be—in furthering His beneficent designs towards the race. (1 John iv. 11; Rom. ix. 3.)

And this was a period when the Church made the most gigantic successes. These men in a brief space changed the appearance of the entire world. The love that glowed in their hearts, that made them indifferent to poverty, and privation, and persecution, and death itself in the good cause, made them a power in God's hands for effecting changes the like of which we have never witnessed in the moral

and spiritual condition of the world.

(9) Is it asked *why in this age we have not a repetition of Pentecostal phenomena?* Not, certainly, because of any change in the Gospel, or any change in the depraved hearts of men. The medicine is just what it always was, and so is the disease. The explanation is to be found in the character of those who are now entrusted with the commission to preach the Gospel. The Christian of this age is only partially restored from his enmity against God, partially cured of his disease. The root of the matter has not been taken away. Selfishness has not been completely eradicated from his heart. He has other aims than God's glory. He esteems wealth, and ease, and fame far more than he esteems Christ; and far more, therefore, than he esteems the salvation of souls. (Mark x. 37.)

A native of Africa having heard the Gospel, and apprehended in some degree its momentous importance, said to Dr. Livingstone, "Did your father know these things?" "O yes; he did." "Then why

did he not come and tell them to my father? My father died without a knowledge of this truth." When the Christian men and women of this generation are asked why they did not take the Gospel to their heathen contemporaries, what must they answer? That they had not the means? That they had no responsibility in connection with the perishing millions around? No; they must answer, with shame and confusion of face, that such was their selfishness, that so little were they animated by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, that they had nothing but the crumbs of the feast for the purposes of benevolence.

A plan was mooted ten years ago, or thereabout, by which, had it been adopted, the Gospel would by this time have been preached to "every creature." It was that the Evangelical Churches of Christendom should forthwith supply 50,000 men, and means to the extent of £10,000,000 a year. A prodigious lot of men! But still not 2 per cent. of our church membership. And a prodigious lot of money! But still not

requiring an average weekly contribution of 1s. per member. Why 50,000 men were sent by England to the Crimea, to prevent the breaking up of that wretched Mohammedan Empire of Turkey; and in the great American war a vastly larger number than this was slain upon either side. £10,000,000 a year! Why we spend as much as that every year on tobacco in the United Kingdom; and it takes twelve times as much as that to pay our annual drink bill. The Chancellor of the Exchequer could raise as much as that by imposing a paltry tax of 10d. in the £ on the income of England and Scotland. And I am positive there are 10,000 individuals in our Churches who, without any perceptible diminution of their worldly comfort, could pay the whole amount.

I distinctly charge the meagre diffusion of Christianity to the selfishness of the Church. The means have been put into our hands for the evangelization of the world but we have consumed them upon our own lusts. Loving God feebly, not en-



tirely renouncing that self-worship which is the essence of our apostacy, we have had small compassion for our fellow men in the region and shadow of death, and been disposed to make small sacrifices of worldly advancement, and ease, and comfort that they might be saved.

CONCLUSION. — What we want is not to know the love of God, for we know it already, but *to know it more distinctly and fully*. If this truth were adequately realized by us we would throw ourselves into the arms of God, resolved to be His, and His alone, it would become in our hearts a power that would rid us of the old leaven of selfishness and replace it with a Godlike benevolence. Self-sacrifice would become the dominating passion of our soul. We would count nothing dear unto ourselves that we might deliver men from misery into the peace and joy of God.

But are there no examples of self-sacrifice among Christians to-day to show that the Gospel has the same influence now as in the earlier ages? Yes; there are. *There are*

*men and women alive now who esteem Christ more than self*, who imbued with the spirit of Him who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, are offering themselves on the altar of the world for Christ's sake. Their property has been as truly sacrificed for the Gospel as if it had been confiscated by a Nero or a Charles; they have deprived themselves for Christ's sake of the enjoyments of home and friendship as truly as if they had been exiled at a despot's command; they are giving their life as a testimony to their faith in the Gospel as truly as those who perished long ago in the same cause on the scaffold, or at the stake.

Harriet Stoneman was, for thirty-nine years, the victim of a disease which was literally eating away her bones. Her only means of subsistence was an allowance of 3s. 6d. per week which she had from the parish, out of this miserable pittance she contrived to give a penny weekly for missions, and to carry on a correspondence with numbers of people in various parts of the country on the subject of

religion. A native preacher in Hankow (China) has for twenty years been receiving a salary from the "London Missionary Society" of twelve dollars a month. At the time he entered the service of the Society he was offered a secretaryship by the English Consul at a salary of twenty dollars a month, and, had he accepted the appointment, his

BRISTOL.

salary would have been advanced from time to time. At the same place there is an English missionary who labours without charge to anybody. He has an independent income of £700 a year. His own wants are supplied by about 1s. a day. The rest of his money he devotes to the cause of the poor and of the Gospel.

A. F. FORREST.

## NOTES ON RELIGIOUS REVIVALS

FROM

"MEN AND BOOKS, OR STUDIES ON HOMILETICS."

By Professor AUSTEN PHELPS, D.D.

(An analysis by Rev. T. BROUGHTON KNIGHT.)

(a) *Every character has a history of changes; and one great aim of the true preacher is to produce such changes—some being revolutionary. Much of the fanaticism of the pulpit would be forestalled if ministers were more studious of God's method in the training of themselves. As a rule, even fanatical preachers are not converted by fanaticism.*

(b) *Revivals of religion are sometimes sought by expedients untrue to the preacher's own history—expedients which, if encountered at the critical period of his life, would have caused his own soul to revolt from the truth or to stagnate under it. Still*

(c) *A specially valuable resource of homiletic culture is the study of masses of men under religious excitement Consider—*

### I.—THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGIOUS REVIVALS.

1. The *nature* of sympathetic religious awakenings. Finney says, "A revival consists in the return of the Church from her backslidings, and in the conversion of sinners." These awakenings are phenomena of life as old as nations. They are the normal

working of human nature moved by supernatural forces. All the past is dotted over with them; all the future must be the same. The modern excitement termed a revival illustrates only one phase of the experience of which, in kindred forms, history is full. To it is due by far the major proportion of Christian progress.

## 2. *Antecedents of Religious Revivals.*

(a) *Intellectual.* They are sometimes preceded by a fresh desire to investigate some doctrine of our faith. Such popular enquiries should not be ignored by the pulpit. It is then that its wise, guiding, warning, stimulating voice is much wanted.

(b) *Moral.* Dependent as Revivals are upon the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit, they do not come without premonitions; and the signs of their approach will be visible to eyes which are open and watchful for them. There is nothing in the philosophy of a revival which locks it up to occult causes. It will commonly foreshadow its approach in certain spiritual experiences, either within the Church, or in Christian families, or in Sabbath schools, or, it may be, in spiritual changes in the preacher's own soul.

3. *Concomitants of some Revivals.* Pathological affections have brought revivals into discredit among thinking men. We mean that whole class of phenomena to be classified under the titles "hysteria," "catalepsy." An epidemic of them in America, many years ago, received the popular name of "Jerks." No such phenomena attended apostolic preaching, except those expressly ascribed to miraculous gifts.

## II.—THE PROMOTION OF RELIGIOUS REVIVALS BY THE PREACHER.

Generally sympathetic religious excitements are the result of preaching. We do not advocate short-sighted methods of awakening, as unnatural appeals to the conscience and feelings of men, clap-trap, egotism, humdrum, animal magnetism, and the like; but we do most earnestly advocate—

1. The study, by the preacher, of *his own religious history.* The way in which the Holy Ghost has made a living way to, and a living thing of, his own soul. And soul responding to soul, the work of revival begins.

2. The due regard, by the preacher, to *the proportion of truth.*

No other proportions of truth tally so well with the purest types of revivals as the proportion found in the Sacred Scriptures. When dogmatic theology is allowed to monopolize the ministrations of the pulpit; when logic tyrannizes over rhetoric; and theological system overbears homiletic variety, and the adaptations of persuasive speech, there can be no revival.

3. The adjustment, by the preacher, of *plans which shall contemplate revival work*. By the blessing of God, under a wise ministry so adjusted, revivals will be sure to occur. A pulpit not so arranged is like a system of husbandry not planned for a harvest. A ministry which regards revivals as abnormal is a sad sight and a melancholy failure.

4. The employment, by the preacher, as opportunity may offer, of *auxiliary agencies outside the pulpit*. Agencies divinely appointed, maintained, and certificated. In the eyes of sceptical men, contemptible; in the appointment and approval of God, "elect and precious." Thus hard-featured and cross-grained men are subdued by a female Bible-reader; a roving evangelist, despised by three-fifths of a community, reaches the other two-fifths by the power of moral suasion; a motley assembly of 5,000 are held for an hour by the plainest of plain religious talk in a common theatre; 20,000 men and women in the Crystal Palace are kept in such stillness, that they hear one voice intelligibly. How are such things done? What is the philosophy of the success of such men as Whitfield, Finney, Spurgeon, and Moody? What is the secret of their power?

5. The formation, by the preacher, of *a true estimate of the nature and value of Revivals*. For right or wrong they are factors in popular history in our own day, growing to the magnitude of the old Roman Gladiatorial shows. The simple power of sanctified speech seems to be achieving results in popular excitement, which in Pagan life could only be created by brutal and sanguinary spectacles. To form a correct and influential opinion on revivals—

(a) *Questions* similar to the following should be prayerfully asked and philosophically investigated:—Are revivals of religion a normal method of Divine working for the world's conversion?



What is their relation to Divine sovereignty? Are any laws of the working of the Holy Spirit in them discoverable? In what condition of the popular mind are revivals to be looked for? What agency of the pulpit is preparative to a revival? What agencies auxiliary to the pulpit are most essential? What types of theology are dominant in the most valuable revivals? Are children proper subjects of conversion in revivals? What are the pathological perils incident to such awakenings? Does the subsidence of a revival imply religious decline? What is that change in professing Christians which often occurs in revivals, and is called re-conversion?

(b) The great *awakenings* of the past must be *studied*. As (i.) The *Histories* of the Spiritual Life of the "Great Reformation"; the "Great Awakening" of President Edward's day; the "Feast of Grace" in Ireland; and of "Missions in Madagascar." (ii.) The *Biographies* of Wesley, Nettleton, Finney, and Kirk. (iii.) The *Ministries* of such men as Mr. Spurgeon. Learn something from them all. For if we can come at those principles of human nature which underlie the divine economy in sympathetic awakenings of society to the realities of eternity, we gain thereby the very pith and marrow of homiletic culture.

6. *Sympathy*, by the preacher, with all genuine Revival movements. He should preserve a docile state of mind, take an expectant attitude, and show no antagonism to such awakenings, since a pulpit sundered from these quickenings of the popular heart can never be the pulpit of the future. The work of this world's redemption will sweep grandly over it, and bury it in oblivion. Or if it lives, it can represent only a fragmentary and sickly development of religious life. It can *only build up a Christian Infirmary*, in which shall be gathered the invalid classes of Christian minds. All the signs of our age indicate increase rather than diminution of these popular excitements. *The ministry must understand them, must be in sympathy with them, must be masters in the control of them, or must perish under the billows of them, which are sure to roll in upon the church of all coming time.*

## Selected Acorns from a Stalwart Oak.

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GATHERED FROM DR. AUSTEN PHELPS' "STUDIES IN HOMILETICS."

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THE PREACHER AND INTROSPECTION.—“We preach too little of and from the work of God within us, about the principles in the *deeper processes of spiritual life*, which do not disclose themselves in events, nor provide the material for an anecdote, but are subterranean and tributary to all growth.”

PREACHING—RADICAL.—“The plough of the pulpit runs deep, if it runs at all to the purpose of the pulpit.”

THE PREACHER'S NATURALNESS.—“Animated conversation illustrates principles, and takes on forms which no eloquence of the senate or the pulpit can do without. How often does our wearied criticism of a public speaker express itself in some such inward explanation as this, “Oh, that he would step down from his stilts and talk as we heard him talk at the tea-table on a certain evening.”

THE PREACHER AND THE STUDY OF HUMAN NATURE.—“No preacher can afford to be a *preacher only* and live in his study alone. To know thoroughly one able man in your parish is the counterpart of a homiletic treatise in teaching you how to preach to all the peers of that man.

“The late Lord Lytton gives advice to a young London author, saying, ‘Never write a page till you have walked from your room to Temple Bar, mingling with men and reading the human face.’ He adds the fact that great poets have, for the most part, passed their lives in cities.”

THE PREACHER AND HOMILETICS.—“Preaching is one of the arts of life. It can never be learned as an abstract science only. From books may be learned principles, nothing more. Lectures can pourtray the theory of preaching, nothing else. Criticism is that theory in fragments.”

PREACHING—DISCRIMINATING.—“Preachers often paint characters in the general. Depravity is affirmed and proved as depravity is in the abstract, not as it is softened and adorned by Christian civilization. Piety is illustrated as sainthood, not as it is deformed by infirmity and sin. . . . It is a fancy sketch. It may be praised and censured, as one would criticise the dying gladiator, by the very men of whom it ought to have been a breathing likeness.”

T. BROUGHTON KNIGHT.

## Correspondence Page.

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*[Enquiries or Answers will be inserted here concerning Books, or about Texts suitable for Special Occasions, or as to Sermons on given Verses or Topics. Brief letters on any matter that pertains to the work of the Gospel Preacher or Student will also be welcomed.]*

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### ANSWERS.

#### "HOMOIOUSION AND HOMOIOUSION."

O. N. T. will find what he asks for in Hagenbach's "History of Doctrines," Vol. I.; Dorner's "System of Christian Doctrines," Vol. IV.; Van Oosterzee's "Christian Dogmatics." But probably for clear and condensed statement he cannot do better than turn to Canon Liddon's Bampton Lectures on "Our Lord's Divinity," Lecture VII.

As to the second part of O. N. T.'s question we should be glad to insert his own view as to the direct influence of this scholastic controversy on modern Theological opinion. We are inclined to think his question exaggerates that influence.

EDITOR.

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#### SPECIAL SERVICES FOR NON-CHURCHGOERS.

Our Southport Enquirer will scarcely need to be informed that such services as he desiderates would have to vary very much according to the locality in which the Church is found, and the class of population sought to be reached. We know of an instance in a small town in the Home Counties where it is enough for the minister, who is a young man of good powers and much ardour, to announce occasionally that the ordinary Sunday Evening Service will be special, and then by publishing some attractive title on little handbills, and using special hymns, there is sure to be a Chapel full of those who ordinarily are not found in any House of Worship. We know of another case which is in a large village, when, if it is widely announced that instead of the ordinary stereotyped and conventional evening service

CORRESPONDENCE PAGE (*continued*).

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there will be three or four short stirring addresses, a crowd of those who do not usually attend Church or Chapel will be sure to be gathered. And yet again we may mention a case of a Church in a thronged thoroughfare. Here a Special Service is held at the conclusion of the ordinary Evening Service,—that service, indeed, merging into the second whilst a hymn is being sung, and such of the ordinary congregation as do not wish to remain are withdrawing. This Special Service is made known to “the passers by” by placards announcing the topic, and by handbills of invitation, which are distributed by friends on the Sunday afternoon or just as the service is commencing. By brevity, brightness, and directness of address, and fervour of well-sung hymns, a considerable number of those for whom the service is designed are drawn to it. In each of the instances named, probably, the secret of success lies in the conveying of the impression to passers by, or to Non-Churchgoers, that they are thought of, cared for, yearned for, and are more than welcome. To this end it is essential that as far as possible all seats shall be completely open and free to them. Where, because of any lingering conservatism in the congregation, this is not possible, it is found that the presence at the doors of genial and active friends, who will at once attend to any who are entering, and will give them a hymn book, and will shew them a seat, and will do these things graciously, not with the patronage of caste or Pharisaism, is a great boon.

EDITOR.

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ALCOHOL WINES AND SCRIPTURE.

We shall be glad if any reader will further reply to Nephalist's question. Meanwhile we may mention on the side that “Unfermented Wine is a Myth,” a very exhaustive book on “The Wines of the Bible,” by Rev. A. M. Wilson. London : Hamilton and Adams.

EDITOR.

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We shall be thankful to our readers for further Answers to the Questions in our last.



CORRESPONDENCE PAGE (*continued*).

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QUESTIONS.

## OPEN AIR SERVICES

Will several of our readers send, for our next correspondence page, clear and condensed suggestions, from experience if possible, as to the ways in which Open Air Services can be held with the likelihood of gaining the ear of those who neglect Public Worship, and with the likelihood, too, of awakening a reverential and enquiring attention in them. Have our readers any knowledge of instances in which Church and Nonconformist Ministers have unitedly held such services, and so have come with additional power to the masses who are inclined to find in the sectarianism of the Churches a repellant force from all religion?

EDITOR.

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THE USE OF CATHEDRALS.

Are any of the readers of the *Homilist* able to cite instances of the greatly increased use of our Cathedrals for the good of the people generally, during the last few years? Is there any possibility of their being made the religious centres for Christians of all denominations in their localities?

SPES.

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VOLUNTARY CHOIRS.

Can any of your readers give, in a condensed form, any regulations for the wise management of a Voluntary Choir?

CANO.

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OUR LORD'S DIVINITY.

What are the best books to study on this subject?

DISCIPLE.

## Reviews.

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THREE BOOKS OF GOD : NATURE, HISTORY, AND SCRIPTURE. Sermons by GEORGE DAWSON, M.A. Edited by GEORGE ST. CLAIR, F.G.S. London : Kegan Paul and French, Paternoster Square.

Here is a volume of Posthumous Discourses, preached by a man not only well known to ourselves (for we were neighbouring ministers for some years), but well known to most Englishmen : a man of distinguished ability, and as a popular lecturer almost without an equal. The subjects of these discourses are entitled : The Heavens of God, Science notwithstanding ; The Duty of Studying the Three Books of God ; Advantages of Studying the Three Books of God ; Natural Knowledge for Children ; Christ Fulfils Moses ; Christ and Moses ; Christ and Zeno ; Christ and Epicurus ; Christ and Mohammed ; Christ Increases, Mohammed Decreases ; Creeds of To-day ; Christian Rationalism ; Babel and the Cruciform Inscriptions ; Christianity a Necessary Development ; The Ark of the Covenant Discarded ; Stages of Social Condition and Government ; The Fall of Man ; The New Covenant Growing Old ; The Evolution of Man ; The Ascent of Man from Savagery. The following extract from the preface will present the reader with a tolerably correct idea of the volume. " This book treats mainly of the relations between Scripture and Science, and boldly applies natural law and the doctrine of Evolution to secular and sacred history. But Evolution, as Mr. Dawson uses it, is more the efficient nature of Emerson than the natural selection of Darwin. The discourses of the last volume—The Authentic Gospel—set forth the religion of charity, and showed that salvation and religion are independent of views and opinions. The present volume has a different cast, and shows that Christ's religion rightly understood favours the growth of knowledge, and should lead the Christian to accept the results of historical and scientific investigation. The Authentic Gospel was comforting, and tended to breadth of charity. The present volume is enlightening and tends to breadth of view. These Sermons also, like those last published, were mostly preached near the end of Mr. Dawson's life, and the marked difference between the two series is owing to the selection which has been made according to subject. The two series of discourses would have to be read together and made to interpretate one another, to afford a fair specimen of Mr. Dawson's teaching as his people listened to it." Knowing Mr. Dawson as a talker, vivacious, humorous, and quick, and as a lecturer, original, racy, and redolent with common sense and philosophy, we are a little disappointed with these Sermons, although they are far beyond the run of pulpit discourses, and abound with original thought and striking remarks.

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HOURS WITH THE BIBLE ; OR THE SCRIPTURES IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN DISCOVERY AND KNOWLEDGE. From Manasseh to Zedekiah, with the Contemporary Prophets. By CUNNINGHAM GEIKIE, D.D. London : Hodder and Stoughton.

This is the fifth volume of this most admirable work. Each preceding volume has been noticed in these pages as it has appeared. The dedication of this volume to Dr. Delitzsch is worth quoting. " To my greatly honoured friend,

Doctor Franz Delitzsch, Professor of Theology in the University of Leipsic, Privy Counsellor of the kingdom of Saxony, &c., &c., the faithful confessor of Christ by his life and writings; the one showing what is meant by a steadfast imitation of the Great Exemplar; the other how the modest culture and the profoundest attainments may be laid in child-like love at the foot of the Cross." This volume consists of several chapters, the subjects of which are Judah in Hezekiah's Day, Manasseh, The Great Persecution, The Later Years of Manasseh, Amon and the First Years of Josiah, The Prophets Nahum and Zephaniah, The Early Preaching of Jeremiah, The beginning of the Reformation under Josiah, Judah under Josiah, The Finding of the Book of the Law, The Passover of Josiah, The Beginning of the End, First Year of Jehoiakim, The Prophet Face to Face with his Age, Growing Darkness, Religious and Political, The Prophet Habakkuk, Jehoiachim, Zedekiah, First Prophecies of Ezekiel, The First Years of the Exile. The ability and Biblical scholarship of the Author of the matchless "*Life of Christ*" are too well known to require either characterisation or commendation.

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THE SPEECHES AND TABLE-TALK OF THE PROPHET MOHAMMAD, Chosen and Translated, with Introduction and Notes. By STANLEY LANE POOLE. London: Macmillan and Co.

"The aim of this little volume," says the Author, "is to present all that is most enduring and memorable in the public orations and private sayings of the prophet Mohammad, in such a form that the general reader may be tempted to learn a little of what a great man was, and of what made him great. At present it must be allowed that although 'Auld Mahound' is a household word, he is very little more than a word. Things are constantly being said, written, and preached about the Arab prophet and the religion he taught, of which an elementary acquaintance with him would show the absurdity. No one would dare to treat the ordinary classics of European literature in this fashion, or, if he did, his exposure would immediately ensue. What I wish to do is to enable anyone, at the cost of the least possible exertion, to put himself into a position to judge of popular fallacies about Mohammad and his creed as surely and certainly as he can judge of errors in ordinary education and scholarship." This work presents to us the prophet Mohammad in a new and, we think, in a much fairer light than we have seen him before. We have here his speeches, his laws, religious and civil, and his table-talk. The following passage presents the Arab in a very favourable light. "The fierceness of the Arab warrior was tempered by those virtues in which more civilized nations are found wanting. If he was swift to strike, the Arab was also prompt to succour, ready to give shelter and protection even to his worst enemy. The hospitality of the Arab is a proverb, but unlike many proverbs it is strictly true. The last milch-camel must be killed rather than the duties of the host neglected. The chief of a clan, not necessarily the richest man in it but the strongest and wisest, set the example in all Arab virtues, and his tent was so placed in the camp that it was the first the enemy could attack and also the first that the wayworn traveller would approach. Beacons were lighted hard by to guide wanderers to the hospitable haven, and any man, of whatever condition, who came to the Arab noblemen's tent and said, 'I throw myself on your honour,' is safe from pursuit, even at the cost of his host's life.

Honour, like hospitality, meant more than it does now, and the Arab chieftan's pledge of welcome meant protection, unswerving fidelity, help, and succour. Like his pride of birth, devotion to the clan, courage and generosity, this hospitable, trusty friendship of the Arab belongs no doubt to the barbarous virtues of the old world; but it is just these parts of barbarism which civilization might profitably emulate." A more valuable book on the subject comes not within our knowledge.

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THE QUERIST'S BIRTHDAY BOOK, LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS, AND CONFESSION ALBUM. Glasgow : Bryce and Son.

This is one of the most elegant Birthday Books that has come within our ken. It consists of three parts. The first part embraces all the days of each month in the year, and to each day there are Quotations, not of hackneyed passages of Scripture which we have in the common birthday books, but Gems from the most distinguished authors, such as Seneca, Bacon, Shakspeare, Addison, Johnson, Dryden, Selden, Hooker, &c. There are also Proverbs for every day. The pages in this part consist of two columns printed in ruby and black type, and each adorned with an engraving of Flowers and Grasses by George Cruikshank. Indeed every page of the book is so adorned. Each of the four seasons is illustrated by a magnificently Coloured Picture, occupying a page. The next part embraces the Language of Flowers; and the third part is a Confessional Album in which are numerous Questions, with Extracts from Shakspeare, and spaces for Answers. It would be impossible to present a lady of taste and culture with a Birthday Book that would be more appreciated.

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THE VOICE OF WISDOM, A TREASURY OF MORAL TRUTHS FROM THE BEST AUTHORS. Selected and arranged by J. G. Edinburgh : William P. Nimmo and Co.

Such books as this are useful, and their need of multiplication, as the river of literature swells in volume, becomes more and more manifest. We cannot say that all the quotations here are first-class, and we regret to find that not a few of them are taken from Henry Southgate's "Many Thoughts of Many Minds," and Dickenson's "Encyclopædia of Quotations," and other works of the same order. This certainly ought not to be. Every editor of such works should find out for himself the best extracts from the best Authors, hitherto unused for the purpose. We observe here, too, extracts from Authors such as Wordsworth, Thayer, Hieron, Dr. Thomas, whose names are not given in the "List of Authors Quoted," thus showing carelessness in compilation.

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HANDBOOKS FOR BIBLE CLASSES,—THE EPISTLE TO ROMANS. By DAVID BROWN, D.D., Principal of Freechurch College, Aberdeen. Edinburgh : T. & T. Clark, 38, George Street.

Of the valuable works of this series, which have already appeared and which have been noticed in our pages, this is second to none and superior to some. The Epistle treated is one of the most important sections of Holy Scripture, and the Author is a man whose qualifications for the work are of the highest order. Those who have read his Commentary on the Gospel of St. John, will concur with this judgment. We give this treatise our most hearty recommendation.



SERMONS ON THE LORD'S PRAYER. By AUGUSTUS HARE. London : Smith, Elder, and Co., 15, Waterloo Place.

The dedication of this work by the renowned Author is exquisitely tender and significant. "To the inhabitants of Alton Barnes and Alton Priors these Sermons are dedicated according to the desire of their late affectionate Minister, whose dying prayers, though he was absent from them in the body, were offered up for his beloved people." The Sermons on the Lord's Prayer embrace seven topics :— "The Address ; God's Name ; God's Threefold Kingdom ; God's Will ; Daily Bread ; Forgiveness ; Temptations and Evils." This volume is small in size but priceless in worth.

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OUR SEA-GIRT ISLE. By Rev. JABEZ MANAT.

LAND OF THE MOUNTAIN AND THE FLOOD. By Rev. JABEZ MANAT. London : Wesleyan Conference Office, City Road.

We put these two volumes together for they are by the same Author and from the same publishing house. In relation to "*Our Sea-Girt Isle*," the Author says, "The following pages have been written with the hope that they will interest young people in the natural beauties, monumental grandeurs, and historic names of their native land. In addition to descriptions of landscapes, cities, and villages, there are numerous allusions to the great men, who by their heroism, their literary genius, and religious activities have made England the envy of the world. It is impossible to read of such men without feeling a glow of thankfulness to God for gifting them with the powers which enabled them to serve their country so efficiently. There is no pretence of completeness in the representations of English scenery and topography, but care has been taken to indicate the more prominent features of the counties and islands." This volume contains a very interesting and picturesque description of not only all the counties of England, but of the Scilly Isles, the Isle of Wight, Wales, and the Isle of Man. Also there are no less than 275 graphic illustrations of cathedrals, castles, markets, colleges, museums, notable places, and distinguished characters. It is a volume fraught with interesting information.

"*The Land of the Mountain and the Flood*" is of the same character as the preceding, but treats of Scotland. Both the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland are rich in romantic scenery and events of renowned characters. It is impossible to read these two volumes without desiring to visit the various scenes so ably represented by pen and pencil, and those who visit such places could not do better than take these two books as their companions.

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EXPULSED : BEING THE STORY OF A YOUNG GENTLEMAN. By BERNARD HELDMANN. London : James Nisbet and Co., 21, Berners Street.

We do not know when we have read a nobler story for boys and about boys. We might call it a Cornish tale if we were led to our description mainly by the scenes where the chief part of the plot is worked out,—scenes whose graphic grandeur give a great charm to the book. But it is far more than merely Cornish. The early home life, the school days, the tragic suffering, and rich ripening of

character are all intensely human. The work is marked by a vivid descriptiveness and a vigorous movement that remind us of "Vice Versa," the most popular fiction, we suppose, of the season, and possesses, as excelling that, a keen sense of boyish fun, of family love, of the startlingness of weird accident, of the pathos of genuine sympathy, and of the triumph of Christian courage and patience, that all combine to appeal to the best memories, imaginations, and conscience of even ordinary youthhood. It is worthy of a place on the shelf that holds Hughes's "Tom Brown" and Canon Farrar's "Eric."

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PHILAE: OR, THE THRONE OF THE PRIEST. A DRAMA OF ANCIENT EGYPT.  
London: Chapman and Hall, Henrietta Street.

This Drama is the work of one who has a "strong belief that there are both open and secret exertions in England of a very resolute and subtle character which are fast leading to evil days between the Church of Christ and the organized sacerdotalism of Rome." It is dedicated with express permission to Mr. Gladstone and with much admiration for his character, though doubtless the author is aware of the frequent charges of sympathy with sacramentarianism and sacerdotalism that are brought against this illustrious statesman. The plot is worked out at Thebes, and subsequently at Philae, the *dramatis personae* being chiefly kings, and priests, and their kinsmen, kinswomen, soldiers, and servants. Earnestly desiring that in the conflict between priestcraft and kingcraft the latter should win and that both should yield to manhood, the writer has wrought carefully at his work of conscience.

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GOD'S MARCHING ORDERS TO HIS PEOPLE. By Rev. WILLIAM BIRKS. London :  
T. Woolmer, Paternoster Row.

This little missive is all afire with the loyal and loving ardour for Christ and for souls that has always distinguished the Religious Denomination to which its author belongs. With burning words he ably pleads, severally and successively, with all orders of Christian workers that they should "Go Forward." The honoured and beloved President of the Wesleyan Conference says, in words we heartily endorse,—"It is a soul-stirring pamphlet; would that it could be read by every Christian in the land."

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WHOLENESS; OR, HOLINESS AND HEALTH, through Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.  
By Admiral FISHBOURNE. London: Elliot Stock, Paternoster Row.

Without disparaging the views of many pious people on "Faith-Healing," or questioning the sincerity of the arguments or the accuracy of the facts adduced on Admiral Fishbourne's pages, we are inclined to express the strongest wish that good men would be as willing to dispense with soldiers, and fighting men in armies and navies, as they are anxious that others should dispense with physicians. Men who occupy the position of the writer of this pamphlet believe in resorting

to means that are cruel and murderous, and Christ-cursed, in cases of international strife, while they discountenance the employment of soothing, healing, recuperative means in cases of bodily suffering and pain. How the medicine chest is more dishonouring to God than the musket and the cannon-ball, as at present advised, we fail to see.

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THE RESTORATION OF THE JEWS, AND THE RE-BUILDING OF KING SOLOMON'S TEMPLE. By Brother C. W. MEITER. Published by the Author, 87, Gracechurch Street, London.

This pamphlet is practical enough in its aim for it asks for subscriptions for the re-building of King Solomon's Temple, the purchase of land, and the affording protection and assistance to distressed Jewish settlers, which will be thankfully received and faithfully applied by the Author. He makes this appeal to Jews themselves, to Freemasons, among whom, he says, are many Jews, and to Christians. Such of his readers as concur in his reasoning ought to comply with his request; and even those who do not agree with him will find much that is interesting on every page. The controversialist will find much that he might answer, specially in such reckless assertions as that Jews of to-day cling to the ideas of their fathers with greatest tenacity. For ourselves, we can only here record our conviction that it is of supremely more importance to bring the Jew—not to mere conventional Christianity—but to Christ; rather than to restore him to Palestine. For with the Jew in his country as with the Englishman in our own it will be eternally true—"Righteousness exalteth a nation."

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LIFE EDUCATION AND WIDER CULTURE OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY. Its Sources, Methods, and Aims. Being Lectures by JAMES STEWART WILSON, M.A. Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh and London.

A serial like *The Homilist*, whose most sacred purpose through the twenty-five years of its existence has been the promotion of the very work the title of Mr Wilson's book describes, cannot but greet his volume with unusual cordiality. It might seem to the uninitiated in the ways of ministerial life that such a book was scarcely necessary as inspiring and directing the continuous culture of those who ought ever to be becoming abreast of the advancing times. But it is too true, and a scandalous truth it is, that somehow the idea of "Finality" in culture begins to crystallise in many a theological student's mind just as he enters on his ministerial work, and the hundred and one occupations of his parochial and pastoral calling so absorb him that he abandons all schemes for prolonged stretches of reading and assiduous cultivation of a student's habits. He lives too much on his past work, and as always happens with those who live on their past, he either petrifies into conceit, or decays in neglect. In the three hundred pages before us Mr Wilson ably enforces the continuance of life-long culture by showing—*The Minister's Attitude to the Past, and what Lessons it has to Teach;—to the Present, and what Influences it has to impart;—to the Future, and what Powers and Educating Forces it has to Exert*. The students not only of the three great Scotch Universities to which these Lectures were delivered, but of all our Universities

and Colleges might wisely be urged to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" the suggestions of this earnest and interesting book. While not a few who are already in the ministry would be greatly delighted in the perusal of pages that open to them again the possibilities of student life, and that bear in upon them the conviction, at once solemn and joyful, that they not only may be, but must be perpetually learners if they are to be continually teachers. The book would be a capital theme for College Debates, for Clerical Conferences, as it certainly would be an invaluable companion to every young minister who longs, for Christ's sake and the world's, to make the best of his high calling.

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COLLECTED ESSAYS ON THE PREVENTION OF PAUPERISM. By Rev. W. L. BLACKLEY, M.A., Rector of North Waltham, Hants. London: Kegan Paul, Paternoster Square.

OUR NATIONAL PAUPERISM, a Sermon Preached in Westminster Abbey. By Rev. W. L. BLACKLEY, M.A. London: National Provident League, Savoy.

These publications ought to be in the hands of Ministers of Religion throughout the land that is so grievously and shamefully the scene of Pauperism as England is. For none, as far as we have observed, come into closer contact with the pauper classes, and none, as a rule, feel more keenly for them and seek to alleviate their woes than true Ministers of all communions of the Church. Our Sacred Writings, scarcely less in the New than in the Old Testament, supply at once inspirations and principles, and, indeed, very largely, maxims and methods for dealing with the poor, which are perversely overlooked by the nation generally, and even by its religious teachers. But these Essays and this Sermon by Mr. Blackley, who in the best sense is an enthusiast in the cause he represents, are by no means simple reproductions of any literal directions, either Judaic or early Christian. He has become possessed by the spirit of the Bible in the matter, and has adapted its development to the needs of our land and age. He mainly, and very powerfully, argues for a System of National Insurance, which, in almost every direction, would obliterate all the evils that now lead to, and accompany, and follow pauperism. Our readers who would become acquainted with the facts of the case, and have fairly and ably put before them "a national cure for a national cause," should read both the Sermon, so appropriately preached in England's chief Sanctuary, and the collected shilling volume of Essays.

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LAND NATIONALISATION, ITS NECESSITY AND ITS AIMS, being a comparison of the system of Landlord and Tenant with that of occupying ownership, in their influence on the well-being of the People. By ALFRED RUSSELL WALLACE. London: Trubner and Co., Ludgate Hill.

The Land Question is not only coming to the front in the consideration of the Politician, but in that of every Minister of Religion who is burdened, as is the writer of the books reviewed in our last notice, with the social, and consequently



moral wrongs to be found in English society, on every hand, to-day. Indeed, in his dedicatory note to this volume Mr. Wallace points to the Land Question as to "the great reform which will surely tend to abolish pauperism." We are inclined to think that national insurance and nationalisation of the land together would, to a large degree, effect what Mr. Blackley and Mr. Wallace each think his own panacea would accomplish, and the more rapidly if the Blue Ribbon crusade continues its magnificent victories. This book deals clearly and courageously with its chosen topic under such heads as, Our Poverty and our Wealth, Landlordism in Ireland, Scotland, and England, Occupying Ownership, Cause of Low Wages and Pauperism, The Solution of the Problem. The key-note of the whole is, of course, "Occupying Ownership," by which is meant not any phase of wild communism, such as that all men should have equal holdings, but simply this, "that the occupier and cultivator of the land should be also the virtual owner." The advantages of this are clearly set out, the practicability of it is thoroughly dealt with, and the rectitude of it earnestly contended for. Perhaps no part of the book is more conclusive than the weighty indictment, under ten heads, against the present unrestricted private property in land. We have no hesitation in giving in our adhesion to the principle for which Mr. Wallace contends, not mainly because he is able to fortify many of his positions by quotations from Froude, John Stuart Mill, Professor Newman, Herbert Spencer, and Mr. Gladstone, but because we find that principle veining the entire teachings of the Old and New Testament, and gathered up in the inspired declaration, "The earth hath He given to the children of men." We recommend our readers to become possessed of this little book, little in size, great in worth. For it cannot but be well for Christendom that the teachers of its accepted Religion should let their thoughts play freely around a theme that so greatly concerns the social amelioration of the masses of its population, and the righteous stability of the Commonwealths themselves. The men who were eloquent about Free Trade in Corn, and Slave Emancipation, must not have successors who are dumb about the anomalies, and wrongs, and tyrannies, of our present Land Laws.

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THE TEMPERANCE PRIMER, an Elementary Lesson Book designed to teach the Nature and Properties of Alcohol. By JAMES RIDGE, M.D., B.Sc., Lond. London: National Temperance League, 337, Strand.

Probably few men have more to do with schools, either as Managers or on Boards, than the readers of the *Homilist*. We are, therefore, glad from time to time to bring under their notice the educational works that are sent us for review. Specially is this the case in the present instance. For if, by any means, the England that is now of school age can be enlightened and impressed rightly about Alcohol, there is some hope that in a generation or two we may have a sober England. This Primer is well calculated to interest and to teach those for whom it is so designed. What higher praise can a school-book seek or have?



## *Leading Homily.*

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### HOME MEMORIES.

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“HONOUR THY FATHER AND MOTHER (WHICH IS THE FIRST COMMANDMENT WITH PROMISE).”—*Ephesians* vi. 2.

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**T**his, of course, to the young that this text addresses itself in the first instance; and it may seem at first sight as if there were something of paradox in the suggestion which is implied in the choice of it here to-day, that you should let your thoughts revert to the circle of your home life, and to those primal lessons which are commonly learnt there, at the very moment when, as we may presume, your mind is keenly set and your heart beating for the free race of manhood. And yet there is nothing paradoxical in it.

This familiar commandment, this first word about our social duty, may not inappropriately engage our attention for a little while at the point which many here have just reached, because our life is not a race but a growth.

It is a growth whose roots, if the life is to have an enduring healthiness, should be planted deep in the memories, the associations, the rules, and the sanctities of home. Every man, as age advances on him, invariably tells us how that early life gathers importance in his estimate of things, and this for no merely sentimental reason.

It is not only that the distant scenes, with their vanished

forms and their voices now silent, win a new brightness ; though this of course, contributes an element to our thought and feeling, as we look back over the lengthening years ; but if this were all, it could hardly claim to arrest your attention just now. It is because we survey our life from a new standpoint, reading the record of early days from the inside, as it can be read by no one else ; tracing onwards the effects of some form of goodness then impressed upon us, some ideal that laid its creative grasp upon the imagination, some seed of pure affection striking its early roots. In the light of all that these things have involved, all the influences they have exercised on the mysterious evolution of our personality, all the issues, whether moral or intellectual, with which they were pregnant, we recognise the deeper relations, and may we not say the diviner elements, of that early life in the home circle to which possibly we gave so little heed ; just as we wake up perhaps long afterwards, or far away, and under some different climate, to the beauty of hill and dale and forest, sunshine and storm, which were among the common and disregarded things of youth or boyhood.

In such a retrospect we feel something, at any rate, of the force of St. Paul's comment upon this fifth commandment, that it is the first commandment with promise.

Because the promise was of the material sort, it is none the less deserving of our attention. Indeed, this might very well be felt to give it all the greater claim on us in a time of almost universal practical materialism ; and in any case, if we look behind the form of words, and beyond its primary applications, its material reference does not lower the commandment, or in any way impair its force. Rather, it would seem to deepen it, suggesting its intimate connection with the root principles of our social well-being.

Translate it into the language of your own personal hopes and prospects, the possibilities that are around or before you, and the conditions of their fulfilment, and it sets forth, writing it over the threshold of all moral teaching, the fundamental importance of the filial attitude and sentiment as the first condition of spiritual growth. It declares to us the close connection between

domestic and national virtue, between home life and life in the world; and it bids us, moreover, be careful at the outset to think of the solidarity of all our years for good or evil, thus coming with a reminder, which is surely not altogether superfluous or unneeded by the young as they go out into the society of their contemporaries, with all its fresh ferment, sometimes, it must be admitted, a drifting and chaotic society, tossed this way or that by every new impulse of the time,—the reminder that there should be no variableness in the moral standards of our life. It tells us in accents whose authority we do not question, that as is the standard of conduct in the Christian home, where the highest and purest motives have adjusted it through a long succession of inherited Christian influences, as it is recognised by those you love and honour in such homes; so it claims to be held sacred *semper et ubique*, as one of the unchangeable things, in all the shifting and complex life of manhood.

But some men seem never to estimate these influences at their true value, or to recognise their authoritative character, and the binding nature of their sanctions, till time has swept them far away and out of reach, or till they lie buried in the graves of those they loved long since.

These late learners waste the possibilities of their life. Their later years cannot be what their springtide might have been to them.

That which should have come as an inspiration in youth or early manhood, which is appealing to you to-day, springing up in their hearts as a transforming influence, shaping their life to new aspects of duty, raising it to new levels and imbuing it with new tastes—making it essentially a new life—still retains, no doubt, its inherent beauty, and even has in it an acquired pathos, when it comes late, as a sort of echo from long past years, lingering around things that are now irreparable; but for the man's personal life it has lost its invigorating and inspiring quality.

What should have laid hold upon his growing energies, transforming them, is a thing of altogether different worth when it has sunk into the expression of a sentimental regret; or when



it comes to him, at the best, as a saddening and sobering after-thought, which he may possibly make use of as a warning for others, but hardly for the renewal of his own life.

It is in their youth that men hear the voices and see the visions, which, never leaving them again, are as the guardian angels of the higher life in them, the makers and the builders of all effective character. We hardly need to be reminded how every great example is a fresh witness to this. It was while his heart was still hot with the thought of the home he had quitted that Jacob dreamt his dream and saw the ladder, and woke to feel his new solitude the house of God.

It was under the first fresh influences of the desert life that Moses saw the burning bush and heard the Divine summons, and felt that his feet were on holy ground.

So, too, Saul was still in the ferment of youth when he stood by at the stoning of Stephen, and the words of the dying martyr were engraven on his soul, never to be effaced from it.

For these men, these early awakenings, these morning visitations of the Holy Spirit, were the critical moments. It was then that the veil was rent from their hearts and they walked in a new presence, and something like this is the history of every truly effective life. And it is your happiness to feel that, however it may be with some of us, these possibilities of faith and purpose are still before you.

When your life is waning, long years hence, you will be ready enough, should you by any chance wander back here, to listen to these questionings, and consider such like thoughts; and you will not complain of their simplicity; but you may have to say, "Alas! my life is no longer in my hands; I stand among the ashes of fires that are burnt out."

Therefore it becomes our duty, even at the risk of venturing on that simplicity of subject and directness of appeal which you may call the foolishness of preaching, to ask of you, as we see you starting out on the solitary personal journey, with what visions of life, what besetting consciousness, what estimate of a man's true attitude and aim and thought you are setting forth. Are you inclined to fling yourself unreservedly on the present

and the future? It is a natural and generous impulse which prompts us to do this.

Here, in the presence of all the splendid and various beauty of new surroundings, in a place peopled with the memories of so many centuries of historic life and instinct with so much of that which will help to determine the coming time, in the enjoyment of a new liberty, amidst new thoughts and new opinions, new and various estimates of things, the imagination must indeed be dull, if it is not fascinated; the new is, of course, attractive, and yet the old may be better.

We may be unconsciously comparing the reality of that which we have known with some unrealized ideal of the things around and before us, some baseless promise, some delusive and misleading light.

The reality of life here, as it is commonly lived, has in it, by the confession of almost every one, some elements that are very poor, judge them by whatever standard you please.

Thus the moral and spiritual phenomena which meet us, remind us sometimes very pathetically how there is nothing sadder to contemplate than the life of incongruous poverty in a stately and noble home. And this essential poverty is waiting always to lay its stealthy and chilling grasp upon us. It is a creeping danger, against which our best safeguard at the outset, as always, is that equipment of the spirit which home relations should have supplied to us, that filial attitude which tends to keep men in loving communion with the life higher than their own, and draws them always towards that which is best in the life before them. I freely acknowledge the simplicity of such a subject. Does this, or does its apparent familiarity, incline you to turn away from it, as hardly deserving or repaying much attention? Let us not be too quick to do this, for it is the peculiarity of the most vital elements of our spiritual life that to those who view them critically and from the outside they seem amazingly simple; while they expand, and deepen, and grow in beauty and in wonder as men feel their power, because they belong to the region of life and not of knowledge, and reveal to us latent powers of insight and feeling.

So we find that this plain commandment is not merely a word for domestic use, but keeps us very close to the test questions of our social economy, and to the most fundamental relations of all spiritual life. If its close connection with our social economics seems in any way doubtful, we may try it by a plain illustration.

The reflective life of manhood, and its various experiences, must very soon bring every one of us face to face with problems of sin and shame, social standards, social customs, social practices, which will startle and surprise us by their curious distortions.

We have to make our choice between different codes of life. We may see men serving, apparently, two masters, living two inconsistent lives, tacitly acquiescing in, it would seem, a varying law of conduct, which would imply that the moral law is a Lesbian rule.

We turn from this back to our remembrance of home, or, if that should unhappily fail us, to our conception of what a home should be, with its instruction, its life, its rooted sentiments. We think of it as the shrine of moral purity and mutual trust.

We know that it is absolutely dependent on these for its existence. Destroy these, and the whole edifice crumbles. What remains is only a ruin that can afford the soul no shelter, and mocks our thought of the reality.

So far we are all agreed; all this is obvious; it is one of the axioms of Christian life. Let us then take it a step further, and say that it furnishes a standard which should be universal, binding men in all their various relations and circumstances *semper et ubique*. And let us just stay for a moment to give it concrete expression, applying it to a very practical question—chastity of life, and right conduct towards women. It will be enough to clothe my illustration in language which any member of this University would readily furnish, and say simply that the rule which you would assert as that which you are bound to vindicate for mother or sister, is the universal and Divine rule admitting of no question anywhere.

You assert it, you vindicate it, as axiomatic and imperative. It would be base, intolerably base, if you acted otherwise. If you have read of or seen any society, or looked into any of that

literature in which this standard is ignored, you feel as if you had breathed the foetid atmosphere of some low form of life ; and the glow of repulsion or other strong feeling which animates you is at once the instinct of a healthy nature and a voice higher than your own.

But do men sufficiently remember that these rules and feelings, formed and nurtured in the home, are intended to claim our allegiance through all the changes and chances of life ?

Just now you were amidst your home associations, and its deeply-rooted sentiments and sanctities ; your thoughts were of sister or mother ; but let us suppose that you have stepped out into the larger world, that you are involved in its intricacies and its fashions, that you are confronted by some or other of its shameless dogmas and its cynicisms.

You agree that it would be base, if in respect of your own home you recognised any lowering of that standard of the pure life which we owe to Christian doctrine ; but is a man less base if, in dealing with others from other homes, he lowers that same sacred flag, or if he acquiesces as he sees it soiled in the mire and dirt of depraved social traditions ?

However simple may be the accents of this primal injunction, it is far from being a superficial lesson, if we have truly and fully learnt that the God of our early home is the one God, and that He is the Ruler of all our life. It would seem sometimes as if we needed this revival of our monotheistic faith to make us feel God's presence in every fresh society, and amidst all the confusing voices of crowded communities and of scientific and social theories ; we need it in the excitements that lay their hand upon us, and amidst views of life that whisper so insidiously to both passion and weakness ; we feel the need of its corrective at one time in the social or professional coterie, at another in the moral chaos of a city population, at another, it may be far away, on the outskirts of new civilization, or in the dregs of the old.

“ If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there ; if I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.”



In youth or age it is a happy thing for our life, if this crowning expression of the Psalmist's faith expresses our unsleeping consciousness of the Fatherhood of God.

If, as is sometimes asserted, it be a right view of the tendencies of our day that attention is fixed too exclusively, if not inordinately, on the critical and material sides of life, to the neglect of the finer affections, and the destruction of the true balance of the soul, it is all the more incumbent on a University community like ours to foster those aspirations and habits of thought and feeling, those ideals and ambitions, which are the moving and shaping power of spiritual energy.

And it can, I fear, hardly be doubted that the view which attributes this misdirection to a great deal of the special activity of our generation has much to allege in its support.

How else comes it that our spiritual life is so apt to be a mere ineffective dream about ideals to which we never approximate, or to consist mainly of visions which we never realize in our active moments?

How else are we to account for what seems to be the growing divorce between sentimental approval and practical apprehension, the ominous fact—ominous because suggestive of moral disintegration—that while men seem to have attained to a new appreciation of the one highest and best type of human character, while they agree in admiring it as never before, while they describe it with sympathy and delight to contemplate it, they seem to feel it less and less as the one dominant and constructive force, claiming to rule the whole man, and making of him a new man? Is it possibly because we do not sufficiently cultivate and cherish the pure affections, the higher aspirations, those motions of the Spirit, that embody themselves in filial love and trust and reverence, as having a Divine sanction, as so many intimations of the Divine Fatherhood? Amidst our secularizing tendency we leave them to the chance nurture of home, with its influences so often feeble and imperfect, and nearly always intermittent, or soon lost,—influences which are all too easily swept away in the turbid currents of a passionate and selfish world.

Where this occurs, it happens that the sentiments which should

be the guide and stimulus of practical energy, giving unity and purpose, hope and insight to the life of manhood, inspiring it with faith, and sending it forth to high duties, is barely sufficient to stir the ripples of a languid and superficial emotion.

These are some of the phenomena which seem not only to justify our return ever and again to the simple thought of the filial attitude and aspiration, but to render it imperative on us to nurse and cherish it as a saving factor of moral life.

We rely perhaps too implicitly upon the acquirement of knowledge and the spread of secular education as moral regenerators; but it is a curious and suggestive commentary on this reliance that moral energy should be comparatively speaking so very feeble in the most cultivated classes.

It has to be confessed that our too critical education only paralyses some of us, whilst a training which is too material leaves others case-hardened. Thus it would seem that we have still to fall back upon the training of our taste and aspirations, upon the bent and concentration of our active powers, the growing forces of cherished and disciplined affections, as the only sure guarantee for any advance to the higher levels of life.

Certainly the skill we need, and for which our nature cries aloud in its doubt or weariness, is that which shall infuse into our moral admirations some practical dynamic; and so re-invigorate those spiritual enthusiasms, which are natural to the unspoilt nature of the young, but seem to lose their vitality, to wither and become enfeebled, in our artificial life.

Our need is not some new doctrine, but the breath of a spirit, an awakening of the soul. And of all influences to inform and inspire us, the first is that which we feel to be the pervading consciousness of Jesus, the shaping power of His life. Other portions of His work or influence may crowd upon your thoughts; but this taking up and embracing of the heart and mind of the little child, this new appropriation of the spirit of home life which He lifted heavenwards and transfigured, became in a new sense the source and fountain-head of men's moral energy, henceforth, living in us as the consciousness of a Divine

Fatherhood and the pervading thought of our individual consecration which comes out of it.

We may acquire something of this, no doubt, apart from Him, as a vague poetic sentiment, a casual occupant of our minds, touching the imagination, or claiming admiration, but laying no grasp upon the active powers. But the peculiar gift of Christ consists in this, that He sheds it over our life as a revelation and a motive all in one. Seeing it embodied in His perfect life, the Christian feels it overflowing into his own life as a moving enthusiasm.

In the perfection of this embodiment we are conscious of a new creation, a living personal indestructible force of a new kind, in the circle of things that attract and stir the soul, and determine its life. It takes the thought of our relationship to the sources of our being out of the region of the vague and abstract, and so transfigures human aims and conduct. Creating, as it did, and, in its progressive influence, preserving and perpetuating the healthy union of men's higher aspirations with all the motions and pursuits of their common life, a union never so effected apart from it, this consciousness has worked underneath all outward forms in Church and State, in public and in family life, as the regenerating force of all western civilization.

In society at large, or in your own separate personality, its transforming influence is just the same. As compared with any heathen or scientific type, it gives our life a new outlook, and shapes it into new virtues.

This new revelation of our sonship in Christ is almost too familiar to us as a sort of primal lesson. We learn it so easily, we carry it about with us so lightly, in our unreflecting imitative way.

All the more on this account it demands of us that kind of thought and exercise, discipline and daily purpose, through which alone it is inly realized, and grasped with that embrace of the soul which transfigures the common life.

And the life of unselfish devotion thus created, that which as compared with the ordinary run of lives, is rightly called the new life, is not continuously possible, unless it be penetrated

by this Christ-like feeling that we are living in the Fatherhood of God.

Particular virtues may, and do, flourish in men and in communities apart from its influence ; here courage, there uprightness ; in one love of truth, in another patriotism ; but hardly that general habit, that pervading tone, or hue, or quality of the higher life, which, when we see it in our friend or companion, when we feel it near us, and live in its company, breathes over us as with the purifying breath of some new creation.

Addressing myself, as I do, to the younger portion of those who hear me, the contribution I desire to make to your life, as you are stepping out into new paths, along which are lying the seductive vistas of freedom, is some fresh spark of this feeling of sonship, first kindled in the heart through the affections of home, which shall touch the depths of your nature, and help to fuse it as with chentific change. Bow your will to this consciousness, and walk in its presence, and life assumes a new quality.

"Society," it has been said of the life of our time ; "society is the grave of the higher individuality."

Is this to be your experience ? You would answer God forbid ! and yet it is true in many lives. It is true here as in other places, for society is a very insidious and enervating temptress. Her material attractions lay hold of some men and take possession of them, to toss them about in their fancied liberty, and play with them, till they are dead to higher possibilities. The critical habits, which are the growth of an artificial education and an exclusive and fastidious life, creeping over others, dwarf and wither that which might have grown to a vigorous and productive activity.

The irreligious cave life of this or that coterie or tendency leaves some men the prey of all the entangling cobwebs which the human mind spins around itself so quickly, when insulated from the abounding sources of spiritual light and energy. Depraved traditions, too, will in some quarters meet you, assuming the superior airs of a sort of moral aristocracy, and overawing the weak. Under any such influences as these we



find it true enough, that society is the grave of the higher individual life.

But how different is our landscape, if it is illumined, brightened, purified by those cherished and unchanging sanctities which make the recollection of home so dear to men in later years; and by that besetting sense of our sonship to God in Christ, which has its earthly root in these sanctities, so that the secret life becomes an embodied prayer, "that His Holy spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts!"

J. PERCIVAL, M.A., LL.D.,  
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*and Canon of Bristol Cathedral.*

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#### SPIRIT MORE THAN TOPIC.

"If your subject do not appear to you the flower of the world at this moment, you have not rightly chosen it. No matter what it is, grand or gay, national or private, if it has a natural prominence to you, work away until you come to the heart of it; then it will, though it were a sparrow or a spider-web, as fully represent the central law, and draw all tragic or joyful illustration, as if it were the Book of Genesis or the Book of Doom. The subject—we must so often say it—is indifferent. Any word, every word in language, every circumstance, becomes poetic in the hands of a higher thought."—EMERSON.

#### THE TERM INFIDEL.

"Christians themselves are all infidels in the sight of some other Christians; and they who come nearest to them are the most obnoxious. Strange interpretation of 'Love your neighbour'! The worst of unbelief is that which regrets the goodness of our Heavenly Father, and from which there springs in us a desire of breaking what we cannot bend, and of twisting wire after wire and tying knot after knot in His scourge. Christianity, as I understand it, lies not in belief but in action. That servant is a good servant who obeys the just orders of his master; not he who repeats his words, measures his stature, or traces his pedigree! On all occasions it is well to be a little more than tolerant; especially when a wiser and better man than ourselves thinks differently from us."—*Romilly, in an imaginary conversation with Wilberforce, by* WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

## *Homiletical Commentary.*

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### HOMILETIC SKETCHES ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

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#### Prologue to the One Hundred and Nineteenth Psalm.

ABUNDANT eulogies of this Psalm, in the grandiose style, could be easily quoted, not only from ancient but from modern expositors. In society it is said, that the most meagre minded are ever the most disposed to deal in fulsome adulations. This is to some extent true of many who write on the Bible. How they flatter this grand old book ; they pile epithet upon epithet, crowd metaphor upon metaphor, in order, as they imagine, to glorify certain passages and paragraphs of Holy Writ. This Psalm has, for example, been represented as the brightest of all the bright constellations in the firmament of Biblical revelation; as a sea whose glassy waves are spangled with choicest diamonds; as a magnificent orchard, the branches of whose trees bend under the clusters of the richest fruit; as a splendid parterre, where appear flowers in endless variety of form, size, and hue, exhaling fragrances from the Paradise of God. It requires neither great talent nor thought to deal thus with sacred texts. But what boots it? Does it bring one fresh ray of light into the domain of Biblical truth? Can we make the rose more beautiful with our brush and paint, or the aroma of the lily more delicious by our flattering breath?

This is the longest of all the Psalms, numbering 176 verses, divided into twenty-two parts of eight verses each, and each part arranged under the various letters of the Hebrew alphabet. To each portion its own letter is prefixed, and every verse in that portion in the Original begins with the same letter. *Bishop Wordsworth* says, "In stanza *Aleph*, the blessedness of walking in the way of God's Word is declared. In *Beth*, that Word is pronounced to be the only safeguard of the young against sin. In *Gimel* is a pious resolve to cleave to that Word in spite of the

sneers of the world. *Dalet* expresses a longing for the consolation of God's Word to fortify good resolutions. *He* declares an earnest desire for grace to obey the Word. *Vau* expresses firm trust and intense delight in God's Word, and an earnest desire to see its full accomplishment. *Zain* describes the blessed comfort derived from God's Word in evil days. *Cheth* utters the joy which is inspired by the consciousness that God is his portion, and by communion with those that love His Word, and by a persuasion that all things work for good to all who love Him. *Teth* describes the blessed effects of affliction, as described in God's Word, in weaning the soul from the world and drawing it nearer to Him. *Jod* represents the example of the resignation and piety of the faithful, especially in affliction, as gently drawing others to God. *Caph* is an expression of intense desire for the coming of God's kingdom and the subjection of all things to Him, according to the promises of His Word. *Lamed* declares that the Word of God is everlasting, immutable, and infinite in perfection: and, therefore, in *Mem* it is asserted that God's Word is the only treasure-house of true wisdom: and in *Nun*, that it is the only beacon-light in the darkness and storms of this world: and in *Samech*, that all sceptical attempts to undermine men's faith in that Word are hateful and deadly, and will recoil with confusion on those that make them. In *Ain* is a prayer for steadfastness and soundness of heart and mind, amid all the impiety and unbelief of a godless world: which is followed by an assurance, in *Pe*, that the Word of God brings its own light and comfort with it to those who earnestly pray for them, and fills the heart with compassion for those who despise it. In *Tzaddi* is a declaration that even the youthful soul may stand strong and steadfast, if it has faith in the purity and truth and righteousness of God's law: and, therefore, in *Koph* is an earnest prayer for the grace of faith, especially as is expressed in *Resh*, in times of affliction, desolation, and persecution, as *Schin* adds, from the powerful of this world; but even then there is peace, joy, and exultation for those who love God's Word. And, therefore, the Psalm concludes, in *Tau*, with an earnest prayer for the bestowal of the gifts of understanding, assistance, and grace from God, to the soul which owns

its weakness and rests on Him alone for support." Probably the writer pursued this alphabetical arrangement, as preachers divide their sermons, in order to aid the memory.

The grand subject of the whole, is *the transcendent excellence of God's own Word*,—and His Word as found in the pages of nature, on the tablets of the human soul, but especially as found in those words of men which make up the book we call the Bible. In this book we have *His Word* running and radiating through the words of men. His Word is, in fact, The Bible. This Word of His is here represented by various terms, such as "*testimonies*," "*commandments*," "*statutes*," "*precepts*," "*judgments*," "*truth*," "*way*," "*righteousness*," &c. Like life, which, although it has a million forms, is the same thing, so God's Word is the same though spoken in a thousand languages. Concerning the various terms used here to represent the Divine Word, the following remarks of *Dr. Jebb* furnish a concise and satisfactory explanation:—"1. '*Law*.' This word is formed from a verb which means to direct, to guide, to aim, to shoot forwards. Its etymological meaning, then, would be a rule of conduct, a *κανὼν σαφής*. It means God's law in general, whether it be that universal rule called the Law of Nature, or that which was revealed to His Church by Moses and perfected by Christ. In strictness, the law means a plain rule of conduct, rather placed clearly in man's sight, than enforced by any command; that is to say, this word does not necessarily include its sanctions. 2. '*Testimonies*' are derived from a word which signifies to bear witness, to testify. The ark of the tabernacle is so called, as are the two tables of stone, and the tabernacle; the earnest and witnesses of God's inhabitation among His people. Testimonies are more particularly God's revealed law; the witnesses and confirmation of His promises made to His people, and earnest of His future salvation. 3. '*Precepts*,' from a word which means to *place in trust*, mean something entrusted to man, 'that is committed to thee'; appointments of God, which consequently have to do with the conscience, for which man is responsible as an intelligent being. 4. '*Statutes*.' The verb from which this word is formed means to engrave or inscribe. The word means a definite, prescribed, written law.



The term is applied to Joseph's law about the portion of the priests in Egypt, to the law about the passover, &c. But in this Psalm it has a more internal meaning; that moral law of God which is engraven on the fleshy tables of the heart; the inmost and spiritual apprehension of His will: not so obvious as the law, and testimonies, and a matter of more direct spiritual communication than His precepts; the latter being more elaborated by the effect of the mind itself, Divinely guided indeed, but, perhaps, more instrumentally and less passively employed. 5. '*Commandments*,' derived from a verb signifying to command or ordain. Such was God's command to Adam about the tree; to Noah about constructing the ark. 6. '*Judgments*,' derived from a word signifying to govern, to judge or determine, mean judicial ordinances and decisions; legal sanctions. 7. '*Word*.' There are two terms, quite distinct in the Hebrew, but both rendered '*word*' in each of our authorized versions. The latter of these is rendered '*saying*' in the former volume of this work. They are closely connected; since out of twenty-two passages in which '*word*' occurs, in fourteen it is parallel to it, or in connection with '*saying*.' From this very circumstance it is evident they are not synonymous. The term here rendered "*word*" seems the *λογος*, or Word of God, in its most Divine sense; the announcement of God's revealed will; His command; His oracle; at times, the special communication to the prophets. The ten commandments are called by this term in Exodus; and it means the oracle in the temple. In this Psalm it may be considered as— (1) God's commandments in general. (2) As a revealed promise of certain blessings to the righteous. (3) As a thing committed to him as the minister of God. (4) As a rule of conduct; a channel of illumination. 8. As to the remaining word "*way*," that occurs but twice as a characteristic word, and the places in which it occurs must rather be considered as exceptions to the general rule; so that I am not disposed to consider it as intended to be a cognate expression with the above. At all events, its meaning is so direct and simple as to require no explanation; a plain rule of conduct; in its higher sense, the assisting grace of God through Christ our Lord, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.'

Like most of the Psalms this one seems to lack logical contiguity, appears not progressive in its march of thought, and abounds with detached utterances and repetitions. The man who denies its tautological character must have his vision dimmed by Bible worship or traditional opinions.

It is idle to speculate about the author or date of this Psalm. Some have ascribed it to Daniel, some to Ezra, some to Jeremiah, some to Nehemiah, and some to David. But, like Melchisedec, it seems to have been "without father and without mother."

"No one who has formed any adequate conception of the genius of David could fancy his selecting an arrangement (alphabetical) which hinders the flow of thought and language and often necessitates the repetition of language."—*Four Friends*.

In going through this Psalm I find three subjects brought into great prominence. The moral rather than the ceremonial, the universal rather than the local, and the practical rather than the doctrinal.

(1) The *moral* rather than the ceremonial. I say moral in contradistinction to ceremonial, for there is nothing here in relation to rites and ceremonies, to civil, social, or religious institutions, nothing about sacrifices, ablutions, oblations, atonements, &c. It is moral law that is here echoed and re-echoed in different forms and tones. By moral law I mean that obligation that grows out of the necessary relationship between man and his fellow, and man and his God, that which the Heavenly Teacher reduced to two commandments, love to God and love to our neighbours. As in the physical universe there is but one supreme law that reigns over all, viz., attraction, so in the moral there is but one, and that is love. Moral law is not something apart from God, some arbitrary enactment, it is the expression of His whole moral nature, and His moral nature is love, "God is love." This law is binding on all, and binding on all for ever. What spiritual force is here ascribed to it! It is spoken of as quickening, guiding, emancipating, and so on. Another subject of thought that is here brought into prominence is—

(2) The *universal* rather than the local. There is nothing

local here. There is no reference to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, or Aaron, to Hebrews or to heathens. It is as unnational as the book of Job, as broad as the Sermon on the Mount. It expresses those moral compunctions, sorrows, and aspirations that belong to man as man. "There is no psalm," says *Alexander*, "in the whole collection which has more the appearance of having been exclusively designed for practical and personal improvement, without any reference to national or even to ecclesiastical relations than the one before us." The other subject of thought that is here brought into prominence is—

(3) The *practical* rather than the doctrinal. There is nothing theoretical or speculative in this Psalm, no system of faith is propounded. It is all about the "cleansing of the heart," "keeping the statutes," "walking in the way of the Lord," "loving the law," "keeping the law," "rejoicing in the law," &c. What is religion? Not mere believing, singing psalms, and offering prayers, but *doing the will of God*. Unless the Word of God is transunited into the soul's life-blood what is it? It is food undigested, it is seed-grain shut up in the granary; the word to really benefit us must be made flesh. "No other Scripture," says *Canon Cook*, "is more saturated, so to say, with a spirit all but Christian, of humility, trust, devoted love to God, and realization of His presence than this Psalm; it is an epitome of all true religion, and must be studied by anyone who wishes to fathom the meaning of the Psalm and the elevation of soul, the hope, joy, confidence felt in the presence of kings and princes by pious Jews."

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.



"Do not inquire if a man be a heretic, if he be a Quaker, a Jew, or a Heathen; but if he be a virtuous man, if he love liberty and truth, if he wish the happiness and peace of human kind. If a man be ever so much a believer and love not these things, he is a heartless hypocrite, a rascal, and a knave."—SHELLEY.

## HOMILETIC SKETCH ON THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

## The Relation of Christ to the Secular Life of His Disciples.

"AFTER THESE THINGS JESUS SHEWED HIMSELF AGAIN TO THE DISCIPLES AT THE SEA OF TIBERIAS; AND ON THIS WISE SHEWED HE HIMSELF. THERE WERE TOGETHER SIMON PETER, AND THOMAS CALLED DIDYMUS, AND NATHANAEL OF CANA IN GALILEE, AND THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE, AND TWO OTHER OF HIS DISCIPLES. SIMON PETER SAITH UNTO THEM, I GO A FISHING. THEY SAY UNTO HIM, WE ALSO GO WITH THEE. THEY WENT FORTH, AND ENTERED INTO A SHIP IMMEDIATELY; AND THAT NIGHT THEY CAUGHT NOTHING. BUT WHEN THE MORNING WAS NOW COME, JESUS STOOD ON THE SHORE; BUT THE DISCIPLES KNEW NOT THAT IT WAS JESUS. THEN JESUS SAITH UNTO THEM, CHILDREN, HAVE YE ANY MEAT? THEY ANSWERED HIM, NO. AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, CAST THE NET ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE SHIP, AND YE SHALL FIND. THEY CAST THEREFORE, AND NOW THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO DRAW IT FOR THE MULTITUDE OF FISHES. THEREFORE THAT DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED SAITH UNTO PETER, IT IS THE LORD. NOW WHEN SIMON PETER HEARD THAT IT WAS THE LORD, HE GIRT HIS FISHER'S COAT UNTO HIM, (FOR HE WAS NAKED,) AND DID CAST HIMSELF INTO THE SEA. AND THE OTHER DISCIPLES CAME IN A LITTLE SHIP; (FOR THEY WERE NOT FAR FROM LAND, BUT AS IT WERE TWO HUNDRED CUBITS,) DRAGGING THE NET WITH FISHES. AS SOON THEN AS THEY WERE COME TO LAND, THEY SAW A FIRE OF COALS THERE, AND FISH LAID THEREON, AND BREAD. JESUS SAITH UNTO THEM, BRING OF THE FISH WHICH YE HAVE NOW CAUGHT. SIMON PETER WENT UP, AND DREW THE NET TO LAND FULL OF GREAT FISHES, AN HUNDRED AND FIFTY AND THREE: AND FOR ALL THERE WERE SO MANY, YET WAS NOT THE NET BROKEN. JESUS SAITH UNTO THEM, COME AND DINE. AND NONE OF THE DISCIPLES DURST ASK HIM, WHO ART THOU? KNOWING THAT IT WAS THE LORD. JESUS THEN COMETH, AND TAKETH BREAD, AND GIVETH THEM, AND FISH LIKEWISE. THIS IS NOW THE THIRD TIME THAT JESUS SHEWED HIMSELF TO HIS DISCIPLES, AFTER THAT HE WAS RISEN FROM THE DEAD."—*John* xxi. 1-14.

EXPOSITION.—Because the last two verses of the preceding chapter seem to close the whole book, some have supposed that John is not the author of this chapter. But the thought, the spirit, and the style seem to stamp it as the production of John's pen.

Ver. 1.—"*After these things.*" The expression may not indicate immediate succession, but rather an interval during which other events had transpired. "*Jesus*

*shewed Himself.*" This means manifestation, and is elsewhere applied to our Lord's appearance. "*To His disciples at the sea of Tiberias.*" On the lake of Geneseret. Seven of the apostles had returned to their native lake and to their former employments.

Ver. 2.—"*There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of*



*His disciples.*" "It is probable," says an able modern expositor, "that we have here the names of all in the group of seven who were apostles, and that the two remaining persons were disciples in the wider sense in which the word is used by John. (Chaps. vi. 60, 66, vii. 3, viii. 31, xviii. 19.) If they were Andrew and Philip, which has been supposed from Chap. i. 40-43, it is not easy to understand their position in the list, or the absence of their names. Thomas is not named by the other evangelists, except in the list of the apostles. (Compare chaps. xi. 16, xiv. 5, xx. 24.) Nathanael is named only by St. John. He is, probably, to be identified with the Bartholomew of the earlier gospels, the latter name being a patronymic. The descriptive note '*of Cana in Galilee*,' is added here only. The sons of Zebedee are not elsewhere given by St. John as a description of himself and his brethren, but this is the only place in which he names himself and his brother in a list with others. In St. Luke's account of the earlier draught of fishes, the sons of Zebedee are named as partners with Simon (chap. v. 10). Their position here agrees with the

Johannine authorship of the chapter. In the lists of the other gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, James and John are uniformly prominent in the first group."

Ver. 3.—"*Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing.*" Literally, I am going to fish. They had no longer a common purse, no longer any reason to believe that they would be fed as they had been by the miraculous interposition of their Master. They were now thrown upon their resources for a livelihood. "*They say unto him, We also go (come) with thee.*" How often the determination of one man stirs others to action. Peter's resolve moves the whole circle of the brotherhood. "*They went forth, and entered into a ship (the boat) immediately; and that night they caught (took) nothing.*" All their efforts, though, probably, most strenuous, proved fruitless.

Ver. 4.—"*But when the morning was now come (day was now breaking) Jesus stood on the shore: (beach) but (howbeit) the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.*" The distance and the dimness of the early morning light might account for their not knowing Him.

Ver. 5.—"*Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any*

meat? (ought to eat). *They answered Him, No.* "The word rendered '*Children*,' (or as the margin has it, *Sirs*) is used in addressing others only by St. John, among the New Testament writers. (1 John ii. 14, 18). It is not the word used in chap. xiii. 33, where we have an expression denoting His affectionate tenderness for the disciples which would not have been appropriate here, for He does not at once reveal His identity to them. It is a word which indeed may express His love for them (compare iv. 49.), but which appears also to have been used as an address to workmen or inferiors, not unlike our own words, boys or lads. They seem to take it in this sense, as though some traveller passing by asked the question because he wished to purchase some of their fish. The word rendered meat occurs here only in the New Testament. It means anything eaten with bread, and was used as equivalent to the fish, which was the ordinary relish."—*Dr. Ellicott's Commentary.*

Ver. 6.—"*And He said unto them, cast the net on the right side of the ship (boat), and ye shall find.*" They knew not which side the fishes were; He did, and He directs them to fling

the net on that side. "*They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.*" In the eighth verse they are described as dragging the net to the shore.

Ver. 7.—"*Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, it is the Lord.*" Here the beloved disciple recognised the mysterious stranger as his Master. Sympathy with a person is the quickest eye with which to see him. "*Now (so) when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto (about) him, (for he was naked) and did cast himself into the sea.*" Instantly, true to his enthusiastic nature, Peter fastened his fisher's tunic about his loins, plunged into the sea, and swam some hundred yards or more, into the presence of Jesus, and fell at His feet.

Ver. 8.—"*And (but) the other disciples came in a little ship; (the little boat) (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.*" The words ship and boat are interchangeable. The distance was about three hundred feet.

Ver. 9.—"*As soon then as they were come to (when they got out upon the) land, they saw (see) a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.*"

Who kindled that fire on the bleak shore? Who laid the fish and the bread thereon, and thus prepared a breakfast for the hungry and exhausted ones? Jesus, undoubtedly, and no one else.

Ver. 10.—“*Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught*” (taken). It is implied that they did so, and thus they supplied a part of the meal of which they were to partake.

Ver. 11.—“*Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all that there were so many, yet was not the net broken.*” The net was full of great fishes. They were not tiny and valueless, but large and precious, but an hundred, and fifty and three.

Ver. 12.—“*Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine* (come and break

your fast). *And none of the disciples durst ask* (enquire) *of Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord.*” Probably they desired Him to declare Himself, although from what John had said, they had the impression that it was the Lord.

Ver. 13.—“*Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.*” Thus He proves at once the fact of His resurrection, His condescending love, and His tender regard for His disciples.

Ver.—14.—“*This is now the third time that Jesus shewed (ἐφανερώθη) Himself to His disciples, after that He was risen from the dead.*” “That is, was manifested to His disciples, that is, His assembled disciples, for if we reckon His appearances to individual disciples, they were certainly more.”—*Dr. Brown.*

HOMILETICS.—We may here transcribe what we have elsewhere written, and look at the narrative as illustrating *the relation of Christ to the secular life of His disciples*. There is nothing but secularity in the whole of these fourteen verses. They contain no reference to the soul, spiritual objects, immortality, moral redemption, or the Eternal Spirit. All is secularity. The passage is not the less religious or Divine on this account. Man is material as well as spiritual, he lives in a material home, and amidst material influences has to form his character for eternity. There are four thoughts here suggested—

I.—CHRIST DOES NOT RELIEVE HIS DISCIPLES FROM THE NECESSITY OF SECULAR LABOUR. Seven of His disciples we here find busily engaged all night on the sea of Tiberias, in fishing.

To this work they had undoubtedly resorted as a means of subsistence: they felt themselves the subjects of that law which saith, "He that does not work shall not eat." Christ does not relieve a man from this obligation when he becomes His disciple. The duty of secular labour continues to rest upon him in all its original force. In truth, a release from this necessity would be an injury rather than a blessing to men. Secular labour is one of the primary conditions of (1) Physical health, (2) Intellectual vigour, and (3) Moral development.

II.—CHRIST ALLOWS THE POSSIBILITY OF FAILURE IN THE SECULAR ENDEAVOURS OF HIS DISCIPLES. These disciples toiled all night and "*caught nothing*." A different result, perhaps, might have been expected. Reason, perhaps, would have suggested the belief that the secular labour of Christ's disciples would never prove futile. It is not so in fact. The crops of a godly farmer fail, the plans of a godly merchant break down, the vessels of godly mariners are wrecked. The settled laws of nature pay no particular deference to piety. Exemption guaranteed from secular failure, however much we may desire it, would be no blessing. It would tend to nourish worldliness, self-sufficiency, and religious neglectfulness. Liability to secular failure is a spur to industry, and a motive for prayerful dependence on Heaven. Let not, therefore, any unfortunate tradesman who righteously conducts his business, conclude that Christ has deserted him. Let not society conclude that such a man is ungodly because he has failed. The disciples toiled all night and "*caught nothing*."

III.—CHRIST IS DEEPLY INTERESTED IN THE SECULAR CONCERNS OF HIS DISCIPLES. First: His eyes are ever on them in their work, though *they may be unconscious of Him*. Whilst their little ship was tossed on the sea, and they were toiling with their net, Jesus stood looking at them from the beach, though they did not know it. "*Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.*" So it ever is. When you, His disciples, who are absorbed in your secular undertakings, battling with difficulties and struggling, it may be, even for the means of subsistence, His all-knowing, yet benignant eye, is on you, though



you may be unconscious of it. "He knoweth the way you take." Secondly: He sometimes so signally interposes for their help as demonstrates His *presence among them*. When they had no meat, Jesus commanded them to "*cast the net on the right side of the ship*," they did so, and they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. "*Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord.*" The knowledge, the power, and the mercy displayed in this act of Christ struck home to their hearts the delightful conviction that Christ was amongst them. Peter, with his wonted enthusiasm, was so excited with rapture, that he girt his fisher's coat about him and cast himself into the sea in order to approach Christ more quickly than the little vessel would bear him. Thus it has often been and still is. He signally appears to His disciples in troubles, and manifests Himself to their delight.

IV.—CHRIST OFTEN MAKES THE SECULAR TRIALS OF HIS DISCIPLES THE MEANS OF A CLOSER FELLOWSHIP WITH HIMSELF. When the disciples had come to shore with their extraordinary quantity of fish, "*Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine.*" Here we have a display of, First: His *merciful condescension*. The narrative gives the impression that He kindled the fire for them on the beach, and prepared their fish and their bread for food; and gives the impression, also, that He ate with them, and thus condescended to identify Himself with them in the necessities even of their physical nature. Here, too, we have a display of, Secondly: His *remedial wisdom*. His eating with them, not only demonstrated His real corporeity and settled the question of His resurrection, but did more,—enlisted at the same time the social sympathies and heart confidences of their nature. The man who attempts to elevate his race in the true sense, and descends not to a level with their hearts, enters not their social affections, and enlists not their confidence will inevitably fail. We must clothe ourselves with the infirmities of the men we would redeem. Thus Christ acted here, and in this has left us an example. What Christ did now with the disciples He ever does, seeking to make the secular conditions of his people the means of a more intimate connection with His heart.

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## Germs of Thought.

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### Contact with Christ.

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“SOMEBODY HATH TOUCHED ME.”—*Luke* viii. 46.

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CHRIST was in the midst of a thronging crowd, and many had touched Him and were even pressing upon Him. But one touch was like no other. It was not involuntary, not accidental; meaning, purpose, desire, prayer, were in it,—faith, also, though not of the most spiritual kind. A touch peculiar in its effect on each of the two persons whom it brought into mutual relations. Three truths suggested:—

I.—It is possible to be in close proximity to Christ without touching Him in any vital sense.

II.—The slightest touch, if thus vital, is sure to elicit a response.

III.—The response is the communication of the virtue that is in Christ Himself.

I.—THERE MAY BE CLOSE PROXIMITY WITHOUT VITAL CONTACT. The many throng and press, only one touches. We are necessarily, each of us, one of a crowd of which Christ is the centre. How many points of external contact. A man is baptized in the name of Christ. One of his names is his Christian name. The date of his letters has reference to Christ's birth. The first day of the week is the Lord's Day, the day of His resurrection. Holidays are connected with thoughts of His birth, death, or resurrection. Inevitably, He enters into our thought and life. And the proximity may be much closer. We may be members of His visible church, accustomed to assemble for His worship, to partake of the memorials of His body and blood, to engage in current discussions respecting His character and work. And yet the contact may be external, mechanical, accidental, not

vital. A human life like a submarine telegraph wire. The wire passes through the water, but is insulated, comes never into contact with it. So a life may pass through an element charged with Christian ideas and influences without coming into true contact with it. The hidden Spirit travels on in darkness to the end, never finding its way through the sheath,—of natural insensibility, thoughtlessness, prejudice, self-will,—by which it is enveloped and shut in.

Contact with Christ like that we have with one whose house we visit when he absent. Name on the door. In the hall, his study, everything speaks of him; his handwriting in letters on the table; everything but—himself. So we may pass through the various chambers of the House of Human Life He made His home, but it will be as though He were absent. There are the linen clothes lying, many things to speak of Him, that belong to Him, but Him we see not. This a possibility to be gravely considered for two reasons:—

1. *Because it is easy not to believe in it.* Men who have long been associated with Christ in external ways slow to understand or believe in a deeper way. They doubt the possibility here, at least, of a profounder experience, a closer fellowship. So easy to be careful about the many things, and not believe that the one thing is needful, or even possible.

2. *Because when it is not only a possibility, but a fact, the loss incurred is so great.* It is the loss of life's greatest opportunity. It is not to behold the fairest of all visions, not to listen to the divinest music, not to read the open secret of our strange existence. Regret of those who never knew or saw one great man whom they had the chance of knowing, compared with regret those are treasuring for themselves who never push through the crowd of beliefs, unbeliefs, fancies, prejudices, systems, theories, that throng Christ and press Him, that they may touch Him with the touch in which is spirit and life. Miss everything but that, throw away every other chance, sell all for this priceless pearl.

II.—THE SLIGHTEST TOUCH WHICH HAS SPIRIT AND LIFE IN IT WILL NOT FAIL TO ELICIT A RESPONSE. Complaint that this

woman's faith was unenlightened, superstitious. But if she believed in the robe, it was because it was His robe. The wearer gave to it its value. It was Christ, therefore, in whom she trusted. And the touch was felt, responded to, gained its end. So great is the sensitiveness of the Divine nature. Nothing is lost upon God. The shepherd lying in the night hears the faintest cry from afar of the sheep that has strayed, and knows what it means.

There may be much show of worship, but no response; but when the soul is awake and cries, the cry goes direct to the heart of the Lord. Somebody has touched Him! No fear that He is so much taken up with rulers of synagogues as to be insensible to the appeal of the humblest, inarticulate as it may be. He interprets sighs. He does not require that those who would receive His help should be learned in theology. A touch is not everything, but it is never in vain, and is the beginning of greater things.

III.—CHRIST'S RESPONSE TO THE TOUCH OF TRUE FAITH IS THE COMMUNICATION OF HIMSELF. He gives the greatest and best He has to give. "I perceive that virtue has gone out of Me." This He gives when He heals,—the life that is in Himself. He gives, therefore, not that which costs Him nothing. Great services are never rendered cheaply. No true union with Christ which does not result in the reproduction of His life in us. Our true salvation in receiving His Spirit, living upon Him as upon the Bread of God. "He that abideth in Me, and *I in Him*, the same bringeth forth much fruit." The supreme question, Is His mind, spirit, life, in me?

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"Indisputably, the firm believers in the Gospel have a great advantage over all others, for this simple reason: that, if true, they will have their reward hereafter; and if there be no hereafter, they can but be with the infidel in his eternal sleep, having had the existence of an exalted hope, through life, without subsequent disappointment."—LORD BYRON.



## Painful Soul Moods and their Antidotes.

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“MY SOUL FAINTETH FOR THY SALVATION : BUT I HOPE IN THY WORD. MINE EYES FAIL FOR THY WORD, SAYING, WHEN WILT THOU COMFORT ME? FOR I AM BECOME LIKE A BOTTLE IN THE SMOKE ; YET DO I NOT FORGET THY STATUTES. HOW MANY ARE THE DAYS OF THY SERVANT? WHEN WILT THOU EXECUTE JUDGEMENT ON THEM THAT PERSECUTE ME? THE PROUD HAVE DIGGED PITS FOR ME, WHICH ARE NOT AFTER THY LAW. ALL THY COMMANDMENTS ARE FAITHFUL : THEY PERSECUTE ME WRONGFULLY ; HELP THOU ME. THEY HAD ALMOST CONSUMED ME UPON EARTH ; BUT I FORSOOK NOT THY PRECEPTS. QUICKEN ME AFTER THY LOVINGKINDNESS ; SO SHALL I KEEP THE TESTIMONY OF THY MOUTH.”—*Psalms* cxix. 81-88.

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“*My soul fainteth for Thy salvation.*” “The word here rendered ‘*fainteth*’ is the same that in *Psalms* lxxiii. 26, is translated ‘*faileth*.’ The idea here is that his strength gave way ; he had such an intense desire for salvation that he became weak and powerless. Any strong emotion may thus prostrate us ; and the love of God, the desire of His favour, the longing for heaven, may be so intense as to produce this result.” —*Barnes*. “*Mine eyes fail for Thy word, saying, When wilt Thou comfort me?*” As the eyes of him that watches for one that cometh not fail with watching. “*For I am become like a bottle in the smoke ; yet do I not forget Thy statutes.*” “This is not a figurative representation of one who had become mellow and ripened by affliction.”—*Hupfield*. “Not taken from the custom of ancients of hanging bottles, filled with wine, in the smoke, high up above the fire ; for wine is not the subject of the verse, nor is there any comparison to a bottle hung up in order to make it dry and wrinkled so as to adapt it for preserving wine.”—*De Wette*. “It seems more suitable to refer to the effects of smoke as destroying and rendering useless. Accordingly the meaning would be that he allows nothing to force God’s Word from his consciousness, although already he has become like a bottle blackened and shrivelled up in the smoke. The object of hanging such a bottle high up would be to set it aside in the meantime as not immediately needed. And its contact with the smoke would be merely the consequence of its hanging in an elevated position, whither the smoke, in the absence of chimneys, would naturally rise. The point of comparison would then be the being set aside.”—*Lange’s Commentary on Psalms*. “*How many are the days of Thy servant? when wilt Thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?*” “This is almost equivalent to how

few. His prayer for speedy judgment on his enemies is grounded on the shortness of his life and of the time within which the Divine justice can reveal itself (Ps. lxxxix. 47). The case does not admit of delay.”—*Young*. “*The proud have digged pits for me, which are not after Thy law.*” “Proud men have digged pitfalls for me, because they are not in accord with Thy law. So in Jer. xviii. 20-22. They dug pits for him, as if it were a wild beast that had to be captured.”—*Kay*. “*All Thy commandments are faithful, they persecute me wrongfully; help Thou me.*” “God help me is an excellent comprehensive prayer; it is a pity it should ever be used lightly, and as a bye word.”—*Matthew Henry*. “*They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not Thy precepts.* Though they had almost completed his ruin, his faith in the Divine Word remained unshaken. “*Quicken me after Thy loving-kindness; so shall I keep the testimony of Thy mouth.*” “*According to Thy mercy revive me, so will I observe the testimony of Thy mouth.*” Homilectically this passage may be taken to illustrate *painful soul moods and their antidotes*. Observe here—

I.—PAINFUL MOODS OF SOUL. There are *painful yearning, anxious questioning, and sense of injustice*.

First: Painful yearning. “*My soul fainteth for Thy salvation.*” There is, perhaps, in all human souls a yearning for something not yet possessed—a deep, gnawing, constant hunger for a real or imaginary good. The whole human creation “groaneth and travaileth together,” &c. “Man never is but always to be blest.” The words suggest (1) The *general objects* of this yearning. (a) A sense of security. “*My soul fainteth for Thy salvation.*” Where is there a mind in which there is not some foreboding of future ill, either of a temporal or a spiritual kind? Excited conscience is ever sounding the trump of spiritual danger and ruin. Hence the all but universal yearning for “*salvation*,” or a deep sense of security. Another object of yearning, (b) A sense of comfort. “*When wilt Thou comfort me?*” Where are souls to be found on this earth entirely free from sorrow, sorrows arising from the disruptions of friendship, the blastings of hope, the breaking down of cherished plans, the sense of guilt, and the forebodings of retribution? Hence the yearning for consolation. “*When wilt Thou comfort me?*” When shall the clouds be scattered, the storm hushed, the wound healed, the distressing hunger appeased? The words suggest (2) The *distress* of this yearning. The words suggest that this state of mind is (a) Weakening. “*My soul fainteth.*” “Fainting,” says

*Manton*, "is proper to the body, but here it is ascribed to the soul; as also in many other places." The Apostle saith, "Lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Heb. xii. 3). Where two words are used, weariness and fainting, both taken from the body, weariness is a lesser, fainting is a higher degree of deficiency; in weariness the body requireth some rest or refreshment when the active power is weakened, and the vital spirits and principles of motion are dulled; but, in fainting, the vital power is contracted, and retireth, and leaveth the outward parts lifeless and senseless. When a man is wearied his strength is abated, when he fainteth he is quite spent. These things, by a metaphor, are applied to the soul or mind. A man is weary when the fortitude of his mind, his moral or spiritual strength is broken or begins to abate, when his soul sits uneasy under sufferings, but when he sinketh under the burden of anxious, tedious, or long affliction, then he is said to faint, when all the reasons and grounds of his comfort are quite spent, and he can hold out no longer. The words suggest that this state of mind is (b) Anxious. "*Mine eyes fail for Thy word.*" Sometimes the yearning becomes so intense that the whole soul seems to be looking earnestly for it, so that the inner eyes "*fail*" with the prolonged intensity of the gaze. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." The words suggest that this state of mind is (c) Consuming. "*I am like a bottle in the smoke.*" Dried, shrivelled, utterly sapless, a complete collapse. An eager prolonged yearning has a tendency to produce this effect, has produced it in thousands of instances, and is producing it now. Go some bright day in the London season through Rotten Row, and keenly scrutinize the countenances of those who by hundreds roll in chariots of opulence before your eye, and on those countenances you will see the unmistakeable marks of yearning hungering souls, souls that have lost all vivacity and are like "*bottles in the smoke.*" Another painful soul mood here suggested is—

Secondly: Anxious questioning. "*How many are the days of Thy servant? When wilt Thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?*" The question here refers to two points, to (1) The shortness of life. "*How many are the days of Thy servant?*" This means how few, how brief. Why should this life be so short in a world where there are such wonderful results to achieve, and with a being who has immeasurable faculties to develope? Why should such millions of the human race in every generation appear and pass away, not only before they are able to discharge the duties of life as moral beings, but before they get any impression of its value? Why should it be that the men whose faculties are the most vigorous and best

trained for noble deeds are struck down in the very prime of life and the zenith of usefulness? And a broader question than these may be asked, why should the life of man be so short? Even if he live to a hundred years, how brief will they appear compared with the work he has to do, with the faculties with which he is gifted, and with the duration of that hereafter which he is destined to live? The question here points to (2) The advent of retribution. "*When wilt Thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?*" Retribution is going on every day with every individual of the human race. But no one feels that it is adequate or complete, all the debts of justice are not paid. Hence from all souls under the cruel sense of oppression there goes out the cry, constant and unhushable, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Another painful soul mood suggested is—

Thirdly: a sense of injustice. "*The proud have digged pits for me which are not after Thy law . . . . They persecuted me wrongfully . . . . They had almost consumed me upon earth.*" This man's persecutors were (1) Crafty. "*The proud have digged pits for me which are not after Thy law.*" Neither their character nor their actions were in harmony with Divine law. There have ever been persecutors beside those who hold inquisitions, forge chains, and kindle faggots. Men of craft and cunning, who lay snares to entrap the unwary, they dig the pits of slander, deception, chicanery, and fraud. It sometimes happens under the righteous providence that these men fall into the "*pits*" they have dug, Haman, Absalom, &c. This man's persecutors were (2) Wicked. "*They persecuted me wrongfully.*" Persecution, although the victim may not be faultless, is always wrong, it is against the law of Heaven to inflict injury on others. This man's persecutors were (3) Cruel. "*They had almost consumed me upon earth.*" This man's persecutors it seems reached almost to his death. Now a sense of injustice, from whatsoever source the injustice comes, is ever a painful mood of soul, and one, alas, that is very common; we question much as to whether an adult human being ever existed on this earth who has not at times experienced this terribly painful mood. Observe here—

II.—THE ANTIDOTES OF PAINFUL SOUL MOOD. There are two antidotes in these verses.

First: Firm confidence in the Divine Word. "*I hope in Thy Word.*" "*Yet do I not forget Thy statutes.*" "*I forsook not Thy precepts.*" God's



Word is the immutable assurance of His love for man and His special care for those who trust in Him. What a "*Word*" was that which Christ uttered! "I give unto My sheep eternal life, neither shall any pluck them out of My Father's hands." Under these heavens there is no resting-place for souls but on this Word. This is the rock and all is sand besides. The only firm anchorage amongst the surging seas of life. Another antidote in these verses is—

Secondly: A spiritual quickening of soul. "*Quicken me after Thy loving kindness, so shall I keep the testimony of Thy mouth.*" The quickening of the soul into a vigorous life of love to God, and trust in Him will enable us to bear up with magnanimity under all the sorrows and trials of the world.

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DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

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"It is not as you fancy, that when God leaves you alone you live, and when He puts forth His power and visits you, you die. Not that, but the very opposite. For in Adam all die. Our bodies are dead by reason of sin, and in the midst of life we are in death. There is a seed of death in you, and me, and every little child. While we are eating and drinking, and going about our business, fancying that we cannot help living, we carry the seeds of disease in our own bodies, which will surely kill us some day, even if we are not cut off before by some sudden accident. That is true; physicians know that it is true. Our bodies carry in them from the very cradle the seeds of death; and therefore it is not because God leaves us alone that we live. We live, because God, our merciful Heavenly Father, *does not* leave us alone, but keeps down those seeds of disease and death by His Spirit, who is the Lord and Giver of Life. God's Spirit of Life is fighting against death in our bodies from the moment we are born. So that our living a long time or a short time does not depend on chance, or on our own health or constitution, but on how long God may choose to keep down the death which is lying in us, ready to kill us at any moment, and certain to kill us sooner or later."—Canon KINGSLEY.

SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE SECOND BOOK OF  
THE KINGS.

## The History of Jehoash.

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"IN THE SEVENTH YEAR," &c.—2 *Kings* xii.

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THE whole story of Joash is soon told. He was a son of Ahaziah, and the only one of his children who escaped the murderous policy of Athaliah. "It would seem that this child, whom the pity and affection of a pious aunt (Jehoshabeath) had preserved, was the only surviving male representative of the line of Solomon. Jehoram, his grandfather, who married Athaliah, in order to strengthen his position on the throne, slew all his brethren, and all his own sons were slain in an incursion by the Arabians, except Ahaziah, the youngest, who succeeded him; while on the death of Ahaziah, his wicked mother, Athaliah, 'arose and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah,' except the little child Joash, who was rescued from her grasp. So that the unholy alliances formed by the descendants of Solomon, and the manifold

disorders thence accruing had reduced everything to the verge of ruin. Measures were concerted by Jehoiada, the high-priest, for getting rid of Athaliah, and placing Joash on the throne, after he had attained to the age of seven; and having in his youth the wise and the faithful round his throne, the earlier part of the reign of Joash was in accordance with the great principles of the theocracy. The Lord's house was repaired and set in order, while the Temple and idols of Baal were thrown down. But after Jehoiada's death, persons of a different stamp got about him, and, notwithstanding the great and laudable zeal which he had shown for the proper restoration of God's house and worship, a return was made to idolatry to such an extent as to draw forth severe denunciations from Zechariah, the son of

Jehoiada. Even this was not the worst, for the faithfulness of Zechariah was repaid with violence; he was even stoned to death, and this, it is said, at the express command of the king. The martyred priest uttered as he expired: 'The Lord look upon it and require;' and it was required as in a whirlwind of wrath. For a Syrian host, under Hazael, made an incursion into Judea, and both carried off much treasure and executed summary judgment on many in Jerusalem, not excepting Joash himself, whom they left in an enfeebled state and who was shortly afterwards fallen upon and slain by his servants. Such was the unhappy termination of a career which began in much promise of good, and the cloud under which he died even followed him to the tomb, for while he was buried in the city of David, it was not in the sepulchres of the kings of Judah. He reigned forty years, from B.C. 878 to 838."

The narrative, whether inspired or not, reminds us of five things worth considering, the dilapidating influence of time upon the best material

productions of mankind, the incongruity of worldly rulers in busying themselves in religious institutions, the value of the co-operative principle in the enterprises of mankind, the potency of the religious element in the nature of even depraved people, and the power of money to subdue enemies.

I.—THE DILAPIDATING INFLUENCE OF TIME UPON THE BEST MATERIAL PRODUCTIONS OF MANKIND. Jehoash here called upon the priests and the people "*to repair the breaches of the house,*" i.e., the Temple. The Temple, therefore, though it had not been built more than about 160 years, had got into a state of dilapidation, there were breaches in it; where the breaches were we are not told, whether in the roof, the floor, the walls, or in the ceiling. The crumbling hand of time had touched it. No human superstructure, perhaps, ever appeared on the earth built of better materials, or in a better way, than the Temple of Solomon. It was the wonder of ages. Notwithstanding this, it was subject to the invincible law of decay. The

law of dilapidation seems universal throughout organic nature; the trees of the forest, the flowers of the field, and the countless tribes of sentient life that crowd the ocean, earth, and air, all fall into decay; and so, also, with the material productions of feeble man. Throughout the civilized world we see mansions, churches, cathedrals, palaces, villages, towns, and cities, in ruins. All compound bodies tend to dissolution, there is nothing enduring but primitive elements or substances. This being so, how astoundingly preposterous is man's effort to perpetuate his memory in material monuments. The only productions of men that defy the touch of time and that are enduring, are true thoughts, pure sympathies, and noble deeds. He who builds up the Temple of a true moral character produces a superstructure that will last through the sweep of ages, the wreck of thrones, and the crash of doom.

The narrative reminds us of—

II.—THE INCONGRUITY OF  
WORLDLY RULERS BUSYING  
THEMSELVES IN RELIGIOUS

INSTITUTIONS. Jehoash was no saint, the root of the matter was not in him; he had no vital and ruling sympathy with the Supreme Being, yet he seemed zealous in the work of repairing the Temple. "*Then Jehoash called for Jehoiada, the priest, and the other priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? Now, therefore, receive no more money of your acquaintance but deliver it for the breaches of the house.*" Though the conduct of corrupt men in busying themselves with things pertaining to religion is incongruous, alas, it is not uncommon. Such conduct generally springs from one of two things, or from both,—*policy* or *superstition*. The religion that is popular, whether it be true or false, rulers recognise and sanction. They use the religious element in the community as a means by which to strengthen their thrones and augment their fame. Not only, indeed, are kings actuated thus, but even the corrupt tradesman, lawyer, doctor, &c., must show some interest in the popular religion



in order to succeed in his secular pursuits. But *superstition* as well as policy often prompts corrupt men to busy themselves in matters of religion. How many build and beautify churches, and subscribe to religious institutions, hoping thereby to escape perdition and to ensure the favour of heaven! Alas, some of the corruptest men are often most busy in religious affairs. The man that betrayed the Son of God at the last Passover was most busy on that awful night; his hand was on the table. The narrative reminds us of—

III.—THE VALUE OF THE CO-OPERATIVE PRINCIPLE IN THE ENTERPRISES OF MANKIND. It would seem that the work of repairing the Temple was so great that no one man could have accomplished it. Hence the king called earnestly for the co-operation of all. *“And Jehoshaphat said to the priests, all the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the Lord: even the money of every one that passeth the account, the money that every man is set at, and all the money that cometh into any*

*man’s heart to bring into the house of the Lord; let the priests take it to them, every man of his acquaintance: and let them repair the breaches of the house.”* They obeyed his voice. The people gave the money, and all set to work; the “priest that kept the door,” “the high priest,” the “carpenters,” the “masons,” the “builders,” the “hewers of stone,” &c. By this unity of action *“they repaired the house of the Lord.”* Two remarks concerning the principle of co-operation.

First: it is a principle that *should govern* all men in the undertakings of life. It was never the purpose of the Almighty that man should act alone for himself, should pursue alone his own individual interests. Men may, and often do, make large fortunes by it, but they destroy their own peace of mind, degrade their natures, and outrage the Divine laws of society. Men are all members of one great body, and was ever member made to work alone? No. But for the good of the whole, the common weal.

Secondly: It is a principle

that *has done and is doing wonders* in the undertakings of life. Our colleges, hospitals, railways, &c., are all the products of co-operation. The more men get intellectually enlightened and morally improved, the more this principle will be put into operation. This principle, however, has its limits. In spiritual matters it must not infringe the realm of individual responsibility. There is no partnership in moral responsibility. Each man must think, repent, and believe for himself. "Every man must bear his own burden." The narrative reminds us of—

IV.—THE POTENCY OF THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN EVEN DEPRAVED MEN. At this time Israel was morally as corrupt as the heathen nations. From the beginning Israel was the Church of God only in a *metaphorical* sense. Never in the history of the world has there been a member of the true church whose sympathies with Jehovah were not supreme. But how many of the Jews had this supreme sympathy? Notwithstanding this, the religious sentiment was in them, as in all men, a

constituent part of their natures, and this sentiment is here appealed to, and roused into excitement, and being excited men poured forth their treasures and employed their energies for the repairing of the Temple. This element in man often sleeps under the influence of depravity, but mountains of depravity cannot crush it, it lies in human nature as the mightiest latent force. Peter the Hermit, Savonarola the Priest, Wesley the Methodist, and others, in every age have roused it into mighty action even amongst the most ignorant and depraved of the race. Cunning priests and crafty kings have appealed to it as the strongest force that can bear them on to the realization of their miserable ends. The truly good and godly must appeal to it if they would accomplish any great work for mankind. By its right action only men can rise, by its dormancy or wrong development men must inevitably fall. The narrative reminds us of—

V.—THE POWER OF MONEY TO SUBDUE ENEMIES. "*Hazael, the king of Syria, set his face*

*to go up to Jerusalem, and Jehoash, king of Judah, took all the hallowed things that his fathers had dedicated, and all the gold that was found in the treasures of the house of the Lord, and sent it to Hazael, king of Syria: and he went away from Jerusalem.*" Here is a man, a proud, daring monarch, who was determined to invade Judea, and to take possession of Jerusalem. Relinquishing his designs, what was the force that broke his purpose? *Money.* It is said that Jehoash sent gold to Hazael, "*and he went away from Jerusalem.*" Truly money answereth all things. Money can arrest the

march of armies and terminate the fiercest campaigns. After contending armies have destroyed their thousands, it is money alone that brings the battle to a close. Money is the soul of all pacifying treaties. What fools the rulers of the people are not to employ money to thwart war in its intents and purposes. Enemies can be conquered by gifts. Evil can only be overcome by good. "If thine enemy hunger, offer him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink, for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head."

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.  
LONDON.

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## SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

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### Divine Peace.

"AND THE PEACE OF GOD, WHICH PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING, SHALL KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS THROUGH CHRIST JESUS. FINALLY, BRETHREN, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE TRUE, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE HONEST, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE JUST, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE PURE, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE LOVELY, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE OF GOOD REPORT; IF THERE BE ANY VIRTUE, AND IF THERE BE ANY PRAISE, THINK ON THESE THINGS."—*Philippians* iv. 7, 8.

THESE words direct attention to the highest good in the universe,—peace; highest because it implies the existence

and development of every conceivable moral virtue. These words suggest three remarks concerning Divine peace.

I.—ITS NATURE IS OF DIFFICULT INTERPRETATION. “*The peace of God which passeth all understanding.*” “That is, which surpasses all that men had conceived or imagined. The expression is one that denotes that the peace imparted is of the highest possible kind. The apostle Paul frequently used terms which had somewhat of a hyperbolic cast, and the language here is that which one would use who designed to speak of that which was of the highest order.” Elsewhere Paul says, concerning the love of Christ, “it surpasseth knowledge”; that is, the knowledge of the understanding. You cannot put it into propositions. (1) Who can interpret peace as it exists in the mind of *God*? We may have negative conceptions of it; exclude from it that which cannot possibly belong to it and which is opposite to its nature. It is not *stagnation*. Not the peace of the lake that has no ripple. He is essentially active. It is not *insensibility*. Not the quiescence of the rock which feels not the greatest violence of storms. He *is* feeling, the Infinite Sensorium of the

universe. But what is it? It transcends all intellectual understanding. We cannot measure the measureless, we cannot fathom the fathomless? (2) Who can interpret Divine peace as it exists in the mind of the *Christly*? The peace of God comes from God, it is the gift of Christ. “My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives give I unto you.” In truth the highest states of mind, such as love, joy, peace, cannot be explained. These are matters of consciousness, not logic. You can no more put the Divinest and deepest emotions of the heart into a proposition, than you could put the ocean into a nutshell. They are things that “cannot be uttered.” Another remark suggested concerning this Divine peace is—

II.—ITS EXISTENCE IN MAN IS A TRANSCENDENT GOOD. “*Shall keep (guard) your hearts and minds (your thoughts) through (in) Christ Jesus.*” It keeps the heart and mind, it garrisons the soul from every distressing element. What are the disturbing elements of the soul? The three chief may be mentioned. (1) There is *fear*. Foreboding fears are agitating



elements. Under the influence of fear, all the powers of the soul often tremble and shake, like the leaves of a forest in a storm. But "perfect love casteth out fear," and peace is the fruit of love. (2) There is *remorse*. Sense of guilt fills the soul with those feelings of self-loathing, and self-denunciation which lash into fury. But in the case of Christly men this sense of guilt is gone. Being made right, or justified, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (3) There are *conflicting tendencies*. In every soul there are instinctive tendencies towards God and the true. In every unregenerate soul there are tendencies towards the devil and the false. These are ever in battle on the arena of un-Christly minds. Hence the wicked are like the troubled sea. He who is Christly is delivered from this conflict. The corrupt tendencies are exorcised, and all the corrupt passions and forces of the soul are brought into one grand channel, and will flow on translucently and harmoniously with ever increasing volume to the great ocean,—God. The

other remark suggested concerning this Divine peace is—

III.—IT CAN ONLY BE REACHED BY THE PRACTICE OF GOODNESS.

"*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest (honourable), whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report.*" Whatever minute definition we may give of these terms, they all stand for the elements of moral goodness; and to these elements we are bidden to give a practical regard. "*If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*" The practice of the *morality of Christ* is the ladder by which alone we can climb through all that is dark and tumultuous in the atmosphere of the soul, into the pure heavens of peace. It is the "doer" of the Word that is blessed, not the hearer. There are some, alas, who recommend other means to this glorious end, but they are utterly worthless. Some recommend ritualistic observances and sacerdotal services. Some recommend faith in an event that transpired on

Calvary eighteen centuries ago. They say you have only to believe on this and peace will come at once. A philosophic absurdity, and a monstrous delusion! Some recommend a mechanical religiousness. They say go to church regularly, join in the liturgy, listen to sermons, partake of the communion, and all will be

right. Ah me! The peace which such things give is like that peace in nature which cradles the thunder-storm. I tell you peace is only reached by the practice of that morality proclaimed in that grand Sermon on the Mount, and embodied in the life of its matchless Preacher, and this requires faith in Him.

Though my means may be small, and name quite obscure,  
Live only by labour, and dwell mid the poor,  
I'm resolv'd upon this, and I'll follow it through,  
To love and to practise the "things that are true."

The things that are showy are things in request,  
The empty and thoughtless regard them as best,  
I've pondered the matter; and resolv'd to pursue,  
Despite of all customs the "things that are true."

The things most imposing are things for the proud,  
The pomp and the glitter enamour the crowd,  
But shams, aye, of all kinds, I'm resolved to eschew,  
And walk in the light of the "things that are true."

Though the things most in vogue are the things to insure  
Most gold for the pocket, most fame for the hour;  
Well, the greedy and vain, for them they will do,  
To me all is worthless but "things that are true."

All cliques and all state-craft, Heav'n knows how I hate!  
They're the blight of the Church, the curse of the State,  
The minions of party what mischief they do,  
Then *Avaunt* to all shams, all hail to the true!

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

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"I am not afraid of majorities. A majority cannot overlay a great principle. God will guard His own cause against rank majorities. In vain shall men appeal to a church cry, or to a mock-thunder: the proprietor of the thunder-bolt is on the side of the people."—HENRY GRATTAN.

## Seedlings.

### Days of the Christian Year.

Luke xiv. 23.

(*The Second Sunday after Trinity.*)

"COMPEL THEM TO COME IN,  
THAT MY HOUSE MAY BE FILLED."

THIS parable presents the Gospel of the kingdom as a sacred feast prepared by the Divine Lord for the hungry hearts of men. But the invitation is declined by one and another who have inclinations for lower things than the Heavenly Host provides. These invited guests excuse themselves on various insufficient grounds. The measures taken and repeated (verses 21, 23) to supply their room, together with the language of our text, indicate—

I.—THE largeness of God's loving purpose. God wills that His house shall *be filled*. And we may be sure that this "house" of the Heavenly Father's gracious purpose is built on a large scale. In it are "many mansions." Its magnitude must surely answer to the exceeding greatness of His power, to the boundless riches of His love. To the question, "Are there few that be saved?" our Lord did not vouchsafe any other reply than that practical insistence on individual duty, "Strive to

enter in," &c. It is far better, He would say, to discharge an urgent obligation than to gratify an idle curiosity. But we cannot doubt that, if He had met the question by a direct reply, He would have said that the full house of His Father would contain an innumerable multitude of guests. To this conclusion point not only (1) The hopes of all holy and loving hearts, but also (2) The terms of predictive Scripture, "Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands." (3) The attributes of the wise, strong and beneficent Father of spirits. (4) The duration of the redemptive scheme, including its long preparation and its protracted operation. (5) The character of the redemptive work, the incarnation, sorrow, shame, death of the Son of God Himself. God purposes to do a vast and immeasurable work in that He is determined that His house shall be filled.

II.—THE fulness of the divine commission. There is great strength in the words, "Compel them to come in." It would be positively ludicrous, if it were not so painful, to think that they have been pressed into the

unholy service of religious persecution. No one thing can be farther from another, than the rack and the stake from the genius of the Christian faith. We have not so learned Christ; we understand well that there are other and higher weapons of compulsion than the sword and the block; physical violence is the resort of impotence and the confession of defeat. We may compel men to come into the holy kingdom of our Saviour by (1) The constant beauty of our daily life; by living in purity, in integrity, in temperance, in love; by (2) The occasional magnanimity of Christian conduct, by the large-heartedness, the self-surrender, the heroic courage which we manifest on some special opportunity; by (3) The convincing presentation of the Christian argument; either that which assures men of the heavenly origin of the faith or that which persuades them to come to His feet and to kneel at His cross; by (4) The earnest persistency of Christian zeal; by making the strenuous, personal, persevering appeal which will not be denied. These are such sources of compulsion as the Lord of love will sanction with His smile and seal with the influences of His Spirit.

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### Luke xv. 2.

(*The Third Sunday after Trinity.*)

"THIS MAN RECEIVETH SINNERS  
AND EATETH WITH THEM."

SOME of the finest tributes ever paid to our Lord were unintentionally offered by those who were least disposed to pay Him a compliment or do Him a kindness. Such was the taunt levelled at Him on the cross, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." Such were the words of our text. That which they meant for a strong reproach we eagerly accept as a high commendation. The "righteous men" of His time considered that the holy man proved his sanctity by the measure of his separateness from sinners, and they argued that the holiest of all—the Messiah—would most scrupulously and most completely shut Himself from the society of the sinful and profane. But they pushed their reasoning a step too far, and went down into serious error. We may let these words speak to us of—

I.—THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH WE SHOULD ASSOCIATE WITH ONE ANOTHER. (*a*) There is a natural fellowship between sinners on the ground of their spiritual affinity. The dishonest, the murderous, the lewd, the intemperate, and those who may be almost as guilty in the sight of God—the scandal-mongers, the covetous, and the



frivolous, associate together and encourage one another in their evil thoughts and ways, but *guilt cannot bear the presence of purity*. The coward does not shrink more tremblingly from the eye of the brave, than does the guilty soul from the presence of the pure.

(b) But there are certain conditions under which the good are found to shun the society of the sinful. It is the duty of *those who are young in years* to do so. Immature in character, unfamiliar with the subtleties and sequencies of evil, they ought not to be exposed to the darker and more fatal perils of human life. It is the duty of *those just redeemed from sinful paths* to do so, else their association may be mistaken for sympathy, and it may be that old propensities will prove too strong for their new principles. It is the duty of *those whose spiritual nature is constitutionally weak* to do so. These should, so far as it is possible, turn from the way of transgressors; they should walk with those who walk with Christ. (c) But, again, it is our Christian privilege to associate with the sinful in order to redeem them. Thus did the Divine Exemplar: "this man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." He knew that the bad might become the good, the very worst be numbered amongst the holiest

and the best; He knew that the hardest heart would melt at the touch of Divine mercy, and the guiltiest life be cleansed by the waters of penitence and faith. So He sat down at the table of the outlaws, and permitted to approach Him the outcasts of society. He laid His gracious hand on the shoulder of the abandoned and spoke words of grace and healing to "him that had no helper." He received sinners. This is the prerogative of the piety that is strong and brave. It may be well to rise above the pagan who had no indignation against vice; but it is better to rise above the Pharisee who had no more heavenly thought of sin than that it was irreclaimable and contemptible, beyond the help and beneath the notice of the wise and good.

II.—THE TERMS ON WHICH CHRIST DEALS WITH US ALL. The terms on which He mingled with the unholy were not those of human equality; they were those on which a Divine Redeemer met souls that needed a Saviour. He received sinners and ate with them that He might teach and save them. He offers Himself to us on these same terms. If we make our appeal to Him as our Saviour, we may be certain of acceptance with Him. Only a false self-sufficiency and a guilty

pride have reason to fear a repulse. Humility—the sense of personal unworthiness—can never come away unblessed of Him, for “this Man receiveth sinners,” and He invites them to sit down to His own table, where He dispenses the blessed fruits of pardon, peace, love, joy, eternal life.

WILLIAM CLARKSON, B.A.  
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### Luke vi. 41, 42.

(*The Fourth Sunday after Trinity.*)

“AND WHY BEHOLDEST THOU THE MOTE THAT IS IN THY BROTHER’S EYE, BUT CONSIDEREST NOT THE BEAM THAT IS IN THINE OWN EYE? OR HOW CANST THOU SAY TO THY BROTHER, BROTHER, LET ME CAST OUT THE MOTE THAT IS IN THINE EYE, WHEN THOU THYSELF BEHOLDEST NOT THE BEAM THAT IS IN THINE OWN EYE?”  
(*R. V.*)

THIS injunction cannot mean, do not form an opinion or give a judgment about men’s moral conduct. Reason compels the first, and Christianity enjoins the second; “Withdraw thyself.” (1 Timothy vi. 5.) It means that a man should be keen to his own, blind towards another’s sins. Or, rather, that the eye should not be sharpened by mistrust and suspicion, but softened by love and compassion. In pondering these words we must—

I.—EXPLAIN THE FIGURE. Of course it is an hyperbole, but the thought is that of a man whose vision was greatly impaired by having, as it were, a beam in his eye, seeking to rectify the vision of another who had only a mote in his. The mere conception of a blinded man aspiring thus to be an oculist, would be ridiculous if it were not so thoroughly sad. We notice—

II.—ILLUSTRATIONS OF THIS TENDENCY. David and Nathan. Pharisee and Publican. Jesus and His censors and critics. All who find it a pleasanter habit to criticise others than to correct themselves; to condemn the faults of others rather than confess their own. We notice—

III.—EXPLANATIONS OF THIS HABIT. Why is this? Because (1) *Of the self-blinding power of sin.* It is only when sin is forsaken that a man comes to himself. (2) *Of the self-hardening power of sin.* It is only charity that covers a multitude of sins. Severity proves guilt rather than goodness. The devil is the arch-accuser. We notice—

IV.—THE CONDEMNATION OF THE HABIT. (1) *They will be judged by others.* (2) *They will be judged by God.* “With the merciful,” &c. (Psalm xviii. 25.)

EDITOR.

**St. Matt. xiv. 2.***(St. John Baptist's Day.)***CHRIST'S OWN TESTIMONY.**

WISDOM justified of *all* her children: therefore, all God's servants, however varying in their circumstances and spheres, concur in glorifying Him. *We* have no Herod, no Salome, &c., no executioner to dread: nor have all to preach repentance. But the main principle of John the Baptist's actions and the corresponding duties in our lives to those in his, profitable to study. (See Collect.)

Without dwelling on his peculiar ministry, observe of it that its principle is universal—viz., repentance to come first.

His character best read by going backward through its development from the outer and transitive to the inner and reflective.

I.—HE WAS VERY BOLD. Pharisee and Sadducee rebuked pungently, monatorily. Soldiers exhorted suggestively. Herod and Herodias pointedly. No sin spared.

This his life-work: not mere sudden declamation; but—

II.—HE WAS RESOLUTE. So Jer. i. 18. (see Gurnall's Christian Armour i. 5., &c.) Not to be put off his course by flattery, opposition, or weariness.

This the foundation of effective boldness. It gives toughness to texture of temperament. Without this, boldness wants that calm dignity which gives weight and, therefore, effectiveness to its activity.

Its secret in Dan. xi. 32. Contrast St. John xvi. 31-33 with Acts iv. 13. We gain it by seeing the Crucified as well as the working Christ.

III.—HE WAS SELF-DENYING. In early life (a lesson for young men wishing to serve Christ well), in diet, clothing, home, social habits (he might have served in His Temple), estimation of others. This *trained* him to resoluteness. And Christ says to us (St. Matt. xvi. 24), no man can achieve anything in the spiritual world without *eschewing* self-indulgence, which is to the Christian warrior what Delilah was to Samson.

Learn then from John the Baptist to seek this self-denial: (1) For sake of Christ, (2) From example of Christ (Romans xv. 3). If His, you and the world must collide somehow. 2 Tim. iii. 12 must reach you somewhere. You need all John the Baptist's qualities to win; and the Holy Spirit gives them if you ask.

CORNELIUS WITHERBY, M.A.  
CLAPHAM.

## Brebiaries.

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### The Two Grand Types of Character.

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"HOWBEIT THAT WAS NOT FIRST WHICH IS SPIRITUAL, BUT THAT WHICH IS NATURAL; AND AFTERWARD THAT WHICH IS SPIRITUAL. THE FIRST MAN IS OF THE EARTH, EARTHY: THE SECOND MAN IS THE LORD FROM HEAVEN. AS IS THE EARTHY, SUCH ARE THEY ALSO THAT ARE EARTHY: AND AS IS THE HEAVENLY, SUCH ARE THEY ALSO THAT ARE HEAVENLY."—1 *Corinthians* xv. 46-49.

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THE words show I.—That man has set before him TWO MORAL IMAGES, OR TYPES OF CHARACTER. The "*earthly*" and the "*heavenly*." These two are essentially distinct in the spring and sphere of their activities. First: The one is *sensuous*, the other *spiritual*. The earthy man is material, partially developed, the other fully. (1) In his views of *happiness*. All his pleasures are of a sensuous order. (2) In his views of *wealth*. He knows of no man that is rich but he who possesses worldly property. (3) In his views of *dignity*. The only honourable man to him is he who occupies the highest worldly position, and who moves in the mere pageantry that dazzles the sensual eye. He is, in one word, a man of the flesh. He sees only the fleshly, appreciates only the fleshly, enjoys only the fleshly. On the contrary, the other is *spiritual*. He lives behind the visible phenomena, realises the spiritual, the eternal. To him the invisible is the only reality; moral excellence, the only wealth and dignity. Though in the world, he is not of the world. He has citizenship in heaven. Secondly: The one is practically *selfish*, the other is *benevolent*. The earthy man is controlled in everything by a regard to his own pleasures and aggrandisements. Self is the centre and the circumference of all his activities, at once the lord of his faculties and the god of his worship. All outside of himself—even the universe itself—he values so far and no farther than as it serves him. On the contrary the heavenly man is benevolent. The social element within him controls the egotistic. His personal feelings are submerged in the ever-rising seas of sympathy with humanity and God. Like Christ, he pleases not himself, and, like Paul,



he would be "accursed" to help others. Thirdly : The one is practically *atheistic*, the other is *godly*. The earthy man sees nothing but natural law, order, &c. "God is not in all his thoughts." The universe to him is only either an eternal or a self-produced and self-regulating machine, a house that either has never had a builder, or whose builder has deserted it. The other—the heavenly man—sees God in all. Like David, sets Him before him ; like Enoch, walks ever with Him. Such are the two images or types of character, that are set before every man. The words suggest II.—That man DOES BEAR THE ONE ; HE SHOULD BEAR THE OTHER. Account for it how you like, every man, in the first stages of his life, bears the image of the "*earthy*." He is sensual, selfish, godless. This fact, which is too obvious to need, or even to justify, illustration, is at once the crime and the calamity of the race. But whilst we do bear the one image at first, we should strive to bear the other. "We shall also" (or as *Dr. Davidson* renders it "Let us also") *bear the image of the heavenly*." Let us do it. First : Because it is *right*. This heavenly image, embodying the reigning elements, realises the soul's highest ideal of excellence. It is just that for which we unconsciously hunger, and for which we shall hunger for ever unless we get it. Let us do it. Secondly : Because it is *practicable*. (1) We have the model in its more imitable form. Christ is the Model. He was pre-eminently spiritual, benevolent, godly ; and never was there a character more imitable than Christ's—the most *admirable*, the most *transparent*, and the most *unchangeable*. We can never imitate a character that we cannot understand, admire, and find always the same. Christ was complete in all this. (2) We have the means in the most effective forms. The Gospel reveals the model, supplies the motives, and pledges the spiritual influences of heaven. Let us do it. Thirdly : Because it is *urgent*. To do this is the grand mission of life. Unless the work is fulfilled our existence becomes a failure and a curse. To pass from the "*earthy*" to the "*heavenly*" is to pass from darkness to light, from sin to holiness, from Satan to God, from Pandemonium to Paradise.

CONCLUSION.—Here is a test of character. Conventional evangelicism concludes that all who adopt certain views, join certain sects, and attend to certain religious ordinances, are of the heavenly type and fold. A tremendous mistake is this ! Without uncharitableness it must be confessed that the vast majority of what are called churches bear the image of the earthy ; they are selfish, sensuous, and practically godless. Here also is a guide for preachers. Unless you get men from the earthy to the heavenly type of life, what boots your sermons, with all their ratiocination

and rhetoric? Get their souls out of the earthy into the heavenly, and in the heavenly go on building up a character suited to the higher hierarchies of being—

“So build we up the being that we are:  
 Thus drinking in the soul of things,  
 We shall be wise, perforce; and while inspired  
 By choice, and conscious that the will is free,  
 Unswerving shall we move, as if impelled  
 By strict necessity, along the path  
 Of order and of good. Whate’er we see,  
 Whate’er we feel, by agency direct  
 Or indirect, shall tend to feed and nurse  
 Our faculties, shall fix in calmer seats  
 Of moral strength, and raise to loftier heights  
 Of love divine, our intellectual soul.”—*Wordsworth*.

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

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## Corporeal Transformation.

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“NOW THIS I SAY, BRETHREN, THAT FLESH AND BLOOD CANNOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD; NEITHER DOETH CORRUPTION INHERIT INCORRUPTION. BEHOLD, I SHEW YOU A MYSTERY; WE SHALL NOT ALL SLEEP, BUT WE SHALL ALL BE CHANGED. IN A MOMENT, IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE, AT THE LAST TRUMP: FOR THE TRUMPET SHALL SOUND, AND THE DEAD SHALL BE RAISED INCORRUPTIBLE, AND WE SHALL BE CHANGED. FOR THIS CORRUPTIBLE MUST PUT ON INCORRUPTION, AND THIS MORTAL MUST PUT ON IMMORTALITY. SO WHEN THIS CORRUPTIBLE SHALL HAVE PUT ON INCORRUPTION, AND THIS MORTAL SHALL HAVE PUT ON IMMORTALITY, THEN SHALL BE BROUGHT TO PASS THE SAYING THAT IS WRITTEN, DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY.”—1 *Cor.* xv. 50-54.

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PAUL here speaks of a bodily transformation that is indispensable, certain, instantaneous, and glorious. I.—There is a transformation that is INDISPENSABLE. “This I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” Its indispensability is not for this state of things but for the state of bliss in the celestial world. “Flesh and blood,” of course, means our mortal nature, “cannot inherit the kingdom of God,”

the heavenly world. He does not say why it cannot. Whether the state of the atmosphere, or the means of subsistence, or the force of gravitation, or the forms and means of vision, or the conditions of receiving and communicating knowledge, or the nature of the services required. He does not go into reasons, but boldly states the fact that it could not be. "Flesh and blood" can no more exist yonder, than the tenants of the ocean can exist on the sun-burnt hills. In such corporeal transformations there is nothing extraordinary, for naturalists point us to spheres of existences where they are as regular as the laws of nature. II.—Here is a transformation that is CERTAIN. "Behold I show you a mystery." The word "mystery" here does not point to the unknowable, but to the hitherto unknown. What the apostle means is, I state to you as a fact that which has not hitherto been fully known, viz., that "we shall all be changed." "We shall not all sleep." Had Paul an idea either that he himself would escape death, or that the resurrection day was just at hand? If he had, he here shows himself, as in some other places, not infallible, but otherwise, for he did die, and at that period the resurrection day was far away in the abysses of the future. His words, however, clearly teach, First: That some would be living when the day dawned. "As in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man, they ate, they drank," &c. Secondly: That both those who were living in the earth and sleeping in the dust would undergo corporeal transformation. "We shall all be changed." III.—There is a transformation that is INSTANTANEOUS. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," that is, in the shortest conceivable period. At a moment when the living population least expect it the blast of the "trumpet" shall be heard, and the transformation be effected. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night," &c. IV.—Here is a transformation that is GLORIOUS. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." The transformation is from mortality to immortality, from the dying to the undying; "death will be swallowed up in victory." "The idea," says one, "may be taken of a whirlpool or maelstrom that absorbs all that comes near it." The sense is, He would remove or abolish death for ever from mankind.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

LONDON.

## Personal Religion.

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“ONE THING IS NEEDFUL: AND MARY HATH CHOSEN THAT GOOD PART,  
WHICH SHALL NOT BE TAKEN AWAY FROM HER.”—*Luke x. 42.*

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I.—ITS DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS. (1) *Unity*. “One thing.” Systems of morals and philosophy have flourished and passed away; intellectual, social, and scientific revolutions mark the history of the past. But personal piety, like the light of heaven, has been the same in all ages. “One thing” (a) In the *condition* of its acceptance. *Repentance*—utter renunciation of sin. *Faith*—not in creeds, or systems, but in Jesus Christ. “One thing” (b) In its *essence*. *Love*. All the fruits of the Spirit grow and ripen on the branches of this all-pervading principle. “One thing” (c) In its *effects*. Pardon, adoption, love of purity, hatred of sin, sympathy for the unsaved. II.—PRE-EMINENT IMPORTANCE. “Is needful.” Other things may be highly prized,—health, wealth, friends, &c.,—but not essential. Possessing all these, life may be an awful failure. Without any of them, it may be a grand success. Rich man and Lazarus. III.—VOLUNTARINESS. “Hath chosen.” The men in God’s army are all volunteers. No conscripts, or draughted men ever fought under the banner of the cross. The true soldier enlists, and “puts on the armour.” Personal religion absolutely a matter of choice. “Put on the Lord Jesus.” Man’s superior dignity, compared with other creatures around us, is seen in the fact that he needs clothing, and that both temporally and spiritually he is to *choose* what he “puts on.” We are as free to choose and change our spiritual as our bodily clothing. Just as we choose our bodily clothing in which to appear before men, so are we deliberately choosing and putting on the spiritual habiliments in which we shall appear on the Judgment Day. IV.—PERMANENCY. “Shall not be taken away.” (1) “Shall not be taken away” *by God*. “He that hath begun.” (2) “Shall not be taken away” *by the trials and sorrows of life*. “Who shall separate us.” (3) “Shall not be taken away” *by wicked men or devils*. Combined powers of earth and hell only tend to make the Christian richer. He may, however, dispose of his own birthright, and find no place of repentance.

THOMAS KELLY

PHILADELPHIA, PA.



## Pulpit Handmaids.

### NATURAL HISTORY HOMILIES.

#### Leviticus xi. 13-19.

In our daily speech we often compare men to animals. To illustrate some trait in his character we call a man by the name of some beast of the field, or bird of the air which has, or is supposed to have, the quality we desire to ascribe to him. He is as surly as a bear, or as fierce as a wolf, or stubborn as a mule, or as cunning as a fox, or as treacherous as a cat, or as revengeful as a wasp, or he is, perhaps, as timid as a hare.

The Bible contains several examples of this kind of symbolism. Ephraim is "a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke." David's enemies are strong "bulls of Bashan." When he would warn the disciples at Philippi against certain false teachers, Paul says:—"Beware of dogs." And our Lord himself, who knew so well what was in man, addressed certain Jews in these terms:—"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers."

Out of several fowls here pronounced unclean by the Levitical law I shall select a few, and will treat of them as *types of character*. I will not discuss the reasons adduced why these various animals were not allowed to be eaten by the Hebrews; but I would suggest, with many of the Commentators, that, perhaps, one reason why they were forbidden was that they had qualities which God wished His people to hold in abomination. He desired the chosen race to shun certain well-known characteristics of these birds. They were not to be Vulture-like, or Owl-like, or Bat-like. On this supposition I will treat of the subject, and may the Holy Spirit help us, so that, from this seemingly unpromising field, we may reap an abundance of wholesome and practical teaching.

### X.—THE HOOPOE.

"And these ye shall have in abomination among the fowls; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: . . . the *Hoopoe*" (erroneously rendered *Lapwing*).—verses 13, 19.

The bird intended in the text is not the Lapwing, familiar enough in this country; but the Hoopoe, a bird of the passerine order, a native of Africa, and of some countries of Asia. In Spring it visits Southern Europe, and occasionally reaches as far north as the British Islands. It is a

bird of great beauty, possessed of a handsome crest, which it raises and lowers at pleasure. The Hoopoe feeds on beetles, worms, snails, and such like. Its favourite resort is, consequently, in moist and marshy places. And in quest of its food it may be seen pecking diligently in the foulest mud.

No bird is more unlike such places, or occupation than the Hoopoe. You would imagine that such a lovely creature would frequent groves and gardens of beauty. To my mind this bird is a type of

the **WORLDLING**. Possessed of the noblest qualities, and intended for a career of honour and glory, we find this man devoting his life and energies to the most grovelling pursuits. His aim, indeed, is not much higher than that of the beasts of the field.

(1) *The worldling has a degraded conception of human life.* In his estimate it is a machine for making money. The nobler parts of human nature are overlooked by the devotee of self. He does not seem to know he has got a soul. And his reason is employed by him, not at all in the discharge of any of its higher and proper functions; but in pursuits which are, as I say, not greatly exalted above those of the lower animals.

(2) *Men can never satisfy themselves with money.* (Eccles. v. 10.) Avarice, like the grave, never says "It is enough." We see men toiling and moiling, desperately struggling as if against poverty, while surrounded with abundance. The point of acquisition which constitutes "wealth" is pushed along as men approach it. What was regarded as

"opulence" becomes, as it is reached, a paltry "competence" at which no man should rest.

(3) *When the heart has been captivated by gold there is very often a serious loss of moral principle.* (1 Timothy vi. 10; Prov. xxviii. 20.) The meanest and shabbiest tricks I have ever come across have been perpetrated by wealthy people. The millionaire will be guilty of low, scurvy, mean actions, which, as a poor man, he would have regarded with unfeigned indignation and horror.

(4) *Multitudes in this country have quite an idolatrous worship of money.* Old Bounderly used to say he greatly valued the man who was worth £100,000, or thereabout. Many do the same thing without saying it. "What is he worth?" And the answer decides the man's worth in the eyes of these people. "Our betters"—a familiar expression to most of our lips—is understood by the mass of Englishmen to mean the monied class. An amusing illustration of this fact was given lately in the *Spectator*. A Wesleyan minister tells that, when a boy, he, with the

other children of the parish, duly marshalled, had stood on the village green on the Sunday morning, and, as the Squire and his friends drove up to the parish church, had sung—

God bless *the Squire*,  
*And all his rich relations* ;  
 And teach us poor people  
 To keep our proper stations.

This valuing of men by the length of their purses, and especially in the absence of any other recommendation to our regard, is contemptible in the eyes of every right-minded person. It is a fact that many, if not most, of the wealthiest men living are mere *nobodies*. They are quite uneducated, and not capable of conversing intelligently on any subject apart from their every-day employment. And they are of no moral or social account whatsoever in the community.

"Wealth," says the eloquent Channing, "ought not to secure to its possessors the slightest consideration. The only distinctions which should be recognised are those of the soul, of strong principle, of incorruptible integrity, of usefulness, of cultivated in-

telleet, and of fidelity in seeking for the truth . . . . What an insult to humanity is this deference to dress and upholstery, as if silkworms, and looms, and scissors, and needles, could produce something nobler than a MAN! Every good man should protest against a caste founded on outward prosperity, because it exalts the outward above the inward, the material above the spiritual; because it springs from and cherishes a contemptible pride in superficial and transitory distinctions; because it alienates man from his brother, breaks the tie of common humanity, and breeds jealousy, scorn, and mutual ill-will."

(5) *Wealth possesses many advantages.* There is nothing, however, whose power is more preposterously exaggerated than money. Our brother Jonathan talks of the "Almighty dollar." But there are many things, as most of us are aware, which money cannot purchase. Riches and happiness have no necessary connection. Indeed, *many have found riches only to increase sorrow.* The days when they lived from hand

to mouth were happier by far than are these days of superfluity. There are men living in palatial houses, and fairing sumptuously every day, who will tell you that they have never been so happy as when they began life in one or two apartments in an obscure street.

(a) Wealth brings with it a burden of *anxiety*. (Eccles. v. 12.)

(b) Rich men are often troubled with *gout* and *indigestion*.

(c) There is a disease well known to physicians, and peculiar to rich men. It consists in a *belief by the patient that he is poor, or on the verge of ruin*. Of all the poor, pitiable creatures on the face of the earth he is the poorest and the most pitiable who—

Starves amidst his store,  
Broods o'er his gold, and, gripping  
still at more,  
Sits sadly pining, and believes he's  
poor.

(d) *The selfish rich man is an object of indifference and contempt to all right-thinking people*. Do you admit to your confidence and gratitude a man who has no concern for anything outside his own

interests? It is the rich man who loves his fellow men, and is ready to give up his influence and wealth unstintedly for their good, that the people "delight to honour."

(e) Men who are only rich, who have no other claim to distinction, pass away and leave *no memorial behind them which the world will love to cherish in its heart*. You may erect a monument, most costly and beautiful, and write on it—for you can write nothing else—"HE WAS A RICH MAN;" but people will not pause to ponder over such a miserable record.

"Rothschild's celebrity will expire on the day of his death. Immortality can be earned, not bought. Here are before us the effigies of men" (referring to some busts of poets, and painters, and musicians with which the room was adorned) "who have gloriously cultivated liberal arts; their busts I have met with in every part of Europe; but nowhere have I found a statue erected to the honour of a man who has devoted his life to making money." (*From a speech.*)

My conviction is that *no*



*men are less mourned when they die, even by their families and kindred, than rich men.* When a rich man dies, the one absorbing thought among the relatives very often is as to the provisions of the will. And in few cases do these provisions give entire satisfaction.

(f) The Great Teacher, to whom alone it was possible to disclose the secrets of the future life, has given us the description of a rich man enduring the penalty of his mammon-worship. It is eminently affecting and suggestive. (Read Luke xvi. 22, 24.)

Speaking on this subject, one has well said: "He goes into eternity"—*i. e.*, the man who has lived to make money—"the wretched bond-slave of a sordid secularity, all his principles, habits, aims, susceptibilities, and desires adjusted to this world, and utterly alien from the constitution of things in the spiritual empire of which he is henceforth to be a denizen. Could he destroy his identity, or annihilate his memory, existence might be tolerable. But this cannot be. The passions he has nurtured into

such gigantic strength are a part of his being, and now, deprived of their proper external objects, and energised by an avenging conscience, they will turn upon the soul with unappeasable fury, and 'their torment will be like the torment of a scorpion.'"

(g) *The fortunes left by rich men frequently prove a curse to those who get them into their possession.* The rapidity with which money disappears, after it has left the keeping of its frugal collectors, is a matter of universal observation and experience. In Lancashire they have a proverb, "Twice clogs, once boots." The meaning is that the first man wore clogs and amassed "a power o' money," his rich son spent it, and the third generation had to take again to clogs.

CONCLUSION. — These remarks have not been made with the intention of creating in your minds what Lord Bacon styles a "friarly contempt of riches," but to save you from a career as ignoble as it shall be unprofitable. I would have you indulge aims in harmony with your nature and destiny. *The cultivation*

*of your moral and intellectual being should be your first and foremost object.* Man's chief end is not to amass money—you may do that and at length be filled with unutterable disappointment and woe—but to glorify God by the culture of high and noble qualities of heart and mind, and to enjoy Him for ever in that land where we shall see Him face to face. Wealth may come incidentally in pursuing such a course, indeed, it often does come, but it must in no case divert the vision or

the heart from higher objects. It should only, on the other hand, become a help in pursuing the true purpose of life, and should be the occasion of a splendid benevolence, a princely generosity, which shall place its owner in that noble line of philanthropists which the world cherishes as a most sacred memory. "For the righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance." "And the memory of the just is blessed."

A. F. FORREST.

BRISTOL.

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REST.—"The best reward for having wrought well already is to have more to do: and he that has been faithful over a few things must find his account in being made ruler over many things. That is the true and heroical rest, which only is worthy of gentlemen and sons of God. And for those who, either in this world or the world to come, look for idleness, and hope that God shall feed them with pleasant things, as it were with a spoon, I count them cowards and base, even though they call themselves saints and elect. Do thou thy duty like a man to thy country, thy Queen, and thy God, and count thy life a worthless thing, as did the holy men of old."—CANON KINGSLEY.

HUMAN LIFE.—"Out of God's boundless Bosom, the Fount of Life, we came; through selfish, stormy youth, and contrite tears—just not too late; through manhood not altogether useless; through slow and chill old age we return from whence we came to the Bosom of God once more, to go forth again, it may be, with fresh knowledge, and fresh powers, and nobler work."—CANON KINGSLEY.

### Selected Seedlings.—May Meetings, 1883.

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THE MINISTER—A TOILER.—“When Christ set out on a precursive ministry the first home missionaries in Judæa, what did He select as the symbol of their calling? Garland of delight? sheaf of flowers? harp of praise? No, a plough. ‘No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.’ ‘Plough’ means hard work—the work of a man who must mind what he is about. It seems to suggest ploughman’s place, ploughman’s fare, ploughman’s fame.”—*Dr. Stanford.*

THE CONVERSION OF THE JEWS.—“The coming of spring in Canada after the long reign of winter was sudden, and in a moment when the spring came the thaw came, the trees put forth their leaves, and the flowers sprang up from the earth, and what was before a land of ice and hardness became a land of bright spring beauty and gladness, and he believed that something of this kind would happen when God’s time came for the Jews.”—*Bishop of Bath and Wells.*

“ONE SOWETH AND ANOTHER REAPETH.”—“The barns whence our supplies are drawn were not stored with wheat without sweat of brow, and, therefore, it seems to be meet and right that we, taking some of the incorruptible seed in our hands, should go forth, even under wintry skies if need be, and scatter the golden grain in the furrows of the world, where God will bless it with rain and sunshine. Our comforts, when traced back, are seen to have been obtained by the hunger and cold and homelessness of numerous benefactors, whose works remain, though their names have disappeared.”—*Rev. J. W. Henderson.*

IMPORTANCE OF THE TEACHER’S WORK.—“The importance of the teacher’s work cannot be exaggerated. It is to quicken the germ of spiritual life as yet latent. The glory of building a church must pale before the glory of laying the foundation of a spiritual life, full of hope and of blessedness. It is prayer which gives the teacher his power. Oh pray, pray fervently before you tamper with an immortal soul!”—*Canon Barker.*

MAKING ETERNITY.—“The future is the fruit of the present. You are making ‘to-morrow’ by ‘to-day.’ You are making eternity by time. Do not fence with words; do not try to avoid the great Scriptural appeal. You know what you are sowing, and ‘whatsoever a man soweth shall he also reap.’”—*Dr. Parker.*

T. BROUGHTON KNIGHT

## Correspondence Page.

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*[Enquiries or Answers will be inserted here concerning Books, or about Texts suitable for Special Occasions, or as to Sermons on given Verses or Topics. Brief letters on any matter that pertains to the work of the Gospel Preacher or Student will also be welcomed.]*

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### ANSWERS.

#### OUR LORD'S DIVINITY.

Out of a very great number of volumes upon the above subject, the following may be "studied" or at least consulted:—"Pearson on the Creed" and the Notes therein. "Bishop Brown on the Thirty-nine Articles," cf. Article Second. "Dorner's Doctrine of the Person of Christ" (Clark's For. Theol. Lib.). "Liddon's Bampton Lectures" (probably the most popular and useful book upon the question). Cardinal Newman's "Arians." "Church History to End of Fourth Century," by Robertson. "Ecce Deus," by Dr. Parker. "Gospel for Nineteenth Century," Part Three. Farrar's "Witness of History to Christ." Bushnell's "Nature and the Supernatural," cf. the Chapter on "Christ's Character." Of course every student will read or consult the standard books upon Christ's life by Neander, De Pressensé, Lange, and Stier.

ANTHORPE RECTORY, LINCOLNSHIRE.

J. FOSTER, B.A.

We should add to Mr. Foster's list, Dr. Young's "Christ of History," as being, perhaps, the best work on the great theme. EDITOR.

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### QUESTIONS.

#### DIVINE JUDGMENTS.

Can any of the interpositions and judgments of God—*e.g.* the parting of the Red Sea for the children of Israel, and the falling down of the walls of Jericho, be called with strict propriety a miracle or a miraculous work occasioned by Divine Providence?

LOWESTOFT.

C. R. T.

#### SALVATION ARMY.

Is the work of this organization deteriorating?—QUERY.



## Reviews.

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CHRIST THE WAY AND OTHER SERMONS. By Rev. A. FÜST, D.D. London : Dickenson.

This volume contains twenty-six Sermons, the subjects of which are,—Christ the Way, Taking Care of the Heart, The All-Sufficiency of God's Grace, The Christian's Influence in the World, Prayer, Stephen, Mary Anointing Christ, The Christian Law of Sacrifice, Hypocrisy, The Fate of a Court Preacher, Paul in Athens, Christ the Subduer of Storms, Gamaliel's Advice, Faithfulness in Little Things, The Widow's Mite, The True Follower of Christ, Eternity in the Heart, Festus' Uncontrollable Temper, The Parable of the Talents, The Grief of Awakened Conscience, The Gradual Development of Christ's Kingdom, Godliness Profitable unto all Things, Origin and Importance of the Name Christian, The Pharisee and the Publican in the Temple, Temple Worship, The Homelessness of Christ and His Followers. The Discourses are short, practical, and far beyond the ordinary run of pulpit productions.

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THE BOOK OF PSALMS, EXEGETICALLY AND PRACTICALLY CONSIDERED. Containing Eighty-two Homiletic Sketches and One Hundred and One Sermonic Slippings. By DAVID THOMAS, D.D. Vol. II., extending from Psalm lxii. to cxvii. London : R. D. Dickenson, 89, Farringdon Street.

Although the pages of the "Homilist" would scarcely be a place for a eulogy of this work, they may most fitly record its issue, and simply characterize it. It is the second volume of "The Homilistic Library," in which the enterprising publisher proposes to issue, in a complete edition, the whole of Dr. Thomas's productions. The Series, so far as printing, binding, and general get up is concerned, bids fair to rival the best Library Editions of Theological Works. Both this and the preceding volume are on the Book of the Psalms. The Press, in some of its many notices of the first volume, has said :—"In being exegetical as well as homiletical the work has great advantage. The Homilies are not fastened on to the Psalms, but are deduced from them, and are such as make conspicuous the great truths taught. In this respect, the book is a great advance upon many similar ones." "The author has dealt very boldly and broadly with his fine themes ; not attempting to see everything in those ancient poems and songs which dry and learned critics and commentators have professed to see in them, but bringing to bear upon their consideration the light and fire of his own Christian thought and imagination." "This first volume on the Psalms is the first volume of what promises to be a new and valuable series of commentaries. What strikes us most forcibly is the free yet reverent spirit of the commentator in handling the Psalms ; he is bound by no ties or considerations but those of truth." "In this volume the Book of Psalms receives the most thorough homiletic treatment it ever yet received ; and it need scarcely be said that for such treatment the Book could hardly have fallen into more competent hands." "A work giving helpful impulses to thought, and to presentation of thoughts in preaching. The material for exegetical notes has been drawn from various and esteemed commentators, and contains the summary of long critical discussions."

This second volume displays precisely the same characteristics as the first, with this notable feature, that the latest pages are as rich and fresh as the earliest. To ministers and students the value of both these volumes is immensely enhanced by a most lucid and compendious index. At a glance the scope of the various passages is laid bare, and every salient topic fastened vividly on the attention. The following is a fair illustration of the "Analytical Contents":—

## HOMILY No. CXVI.

## THE ALMIGHTY IN RELATION TO ERRING MAN.

PSALM LXXX. 1-19 . . . . . Pages 190 to 195.

*History, Annotations, and Homiletics.*

## I. THE ALMIGHTY AS A SHEPHERD.

1. *His flock indicated.*
2. *His dwelling-place described.*
3. *His interposition invoked.*

## II. THE ALMIGHTY AS A CHASTISER.

1. *The chastisements He inflicts are always deserved.*
2. *The chastisements He inflicts are often very painful.*
3. *The chastisements He inflicts sometimes stimulate prayer.*

## III. THE ALMIGHTY AS A CULTIVATOR.

1. *The work He does.*
2. *The evil He permits.*

## IV. THE ALMIGHTY AS A RESTORER.

1. *He restores by special visitation.*
2. *He restores from apparently the most hopeless condition.*
3. *He restores by quickening the soul into devotion.*

THE THREE WITNESSES. THE DISPUTED TEXT IN ST. JOHN. By Rev. H. T. ARMFIELD, M.A., F.S.A. London: Samuel Bagster, Paternoster Row.

The subject of this book is the Seventh Verse of the Fifth Chapter of the First Epistle of St. John,—“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” This verse is omitted in The Revised Version of the New Testament, without any remark whatever of the Revisers in justification of their act. This work treats of the Rise and Growth of the Question, The Balance of Authority, Leading Difficulties, True Controversial Value of the Verse, Counter Difficulties, The Alleged References to the Disputed Verse in Greek Writers, and a Parallel in the Old Testament, The Right Use of the Famous Note in compluterian Polyglott, Does St. Cyprian quote the Disputed Verse? Various Considerations. Those who are interested in such a controversy would do well to peruse this work.

STANDARD STENOGRAPHY, BEING TAYLOR'S SHORTHAND IMPROVED AND ADAPTED TO MODERN REQUIREMENTS. By ALFRED JANES. London: George Coghlan, 110, Camberwell Road.

The following extract from the preface will give our readers some idea of the aim and style of this little book. “This work is founded on the well-known system of Samuel Taylor, who, in 1786, published his essay intended to establish a standard for an universal system of stenography or shorthand writing. The simplicity and regularity of Taylor's alphabetical characters have made his system

popular ever since its appearance, and at the present time it is written by a multitude of newspaper reporters and shorthand writers. The inventor, however, left his system scarcely more than a bare alphabet, and though this may be useful to the amateur, it is not sufficient to satisfy the demands of modern reporting. A writer of Taylor's has, therefore, had to devise abbreviations, and to undertake an amount of constructive labour for which he may not in all cases have felt himself to be qualified, and which at all events has been a long and irksome task. The author of this work has gone through the mill, and is now publishing the result of many years' experience on the newspaper press, he does so in the hope both of lightening the burden for those who may desire to learn shorthand for professional purposes, and of being useful to those who already write Taylor's system in a form less advanced or less systematic than that which is here set forth." All young men, aye and maidens too, would do well to practise the art of stenography. We have known poor boys who have risen to literary eminence and journalistic distinction by this art. We know of no better manual for their direction than the work before us.

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THE SCIENCE OF HOME LIFE. A Text Book of Domestic Economy. By W. JEROME HARRISON, F.G.S. London : T. Nelson and Sons, Paternoster Row.

This is the second issue of the Royal School Series. The first was on Elementary Mechanics containing first lessons in Natural Philosophy. This little work is of fundamental importance in domestic life. Its topics are, The World and Matter, The Human Body, Digestion, Oxygen, The Composition of Water, Carbon and Carbonic Acid Gas, The Atmosphere, Water Pure, and Impure Water, The Temperature of the Body, Foods and their Adulteration, Clothing, Washing, &c. Every young woman should study this valuable little book.

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"THE SALVATION ARMY." A Sermon "Concerning this Sect," preached in Rochdale Road Chapel, Heywood, by the Rev. JAMES DUNCKLEY. Heywood : H. Sinmons, Church Street.

Though the fact that Mrs. Booth was formerly in the Bible Class of the late Editor of the "Homilist," and was married to the "General" by him, naturally excites our sympathy with their work, and though many of the qualities evidenced in the work of the Army, and many, too, of its results command our thankful admiration, there is, no doubt, much force in the criticism, and much weight in the indictment of Mr. Dunkley's able sermon. At the same time, we are growingly convinced that the true way to supersede any erroneous or imperfect "sect" is to do the work they are attempting to do better than they are doing it. The strength Mr. Dunkley spent in this sermon of criticism would have been better spent in illustrating that, as an evangelizing power, his Church possesses a "more excellent way."

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THE ENGLISHWOMAN'S REVIEW OF SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL QUESTIONS. Published Monthly. London : Trübner and Co., 57, Ludgate Hill.

Not only all thoughtful women who are caring about the welfare of their sex, but all men who are rightly interested in the culture, and rights, and employments

of women would do well to let this magazine be a monthly visitor at their homes. If humanity is altogether as capacious and as precious as we theologians are prone to assert in the pulpit, it is clear that whatever conventional customs repress and depress the noble element of humanity that true womanhood possesses must be exposed and resisted by us. In such a work this *Review* will be an altogether wise and strong helper.

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FEMALE EMIGRATION; OR, FIFTY POUNDS, AND HOW WE SPENT IT. By A. M. BEDDOE. London: John Bale and Sons, Great Titchfield Street, W.

In a dozen unpretentious pages Mrs. Beddoe tells the story of a work to which she is devoting much of her time, with equal thoughtfulness, economy, and success. With a little money, carefully employed, the lives of scores have been lit up with new light. For, in guiding and assisting their emigration, their philanthropic friend has given them a chance of colonization, which in every recorded instance has turned out well. The closing words of the interesting pamphlet indicate the wise and hopeful spirit of the writer and worker:—"And now we may literally say that our money is cast upon the waters. We trust to receive it again by little and little in the course of time. Our doing so will be the surest proof of the moral and physical welfare of people in whose future we cannot but take a deep interest, and it will give us the opportunity of telling hereafter 'How we re-spent it.'"

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UNTIL THE DAY BREAK. BIRTHDAY MOTTOES FOR THE HOMEWARD WAY. By G. M. and E. HOLLAND. London: Deaconess House, Mildmay Park.

This is an exquisite Birthday Book; the paper, the type, the artistic illustrations, the Scriptural mottoes, the binding, and the general "get up" make it one of the most beautiful productions of the kind that have come under our notice. It is only to be seen to be admired, and desired as a possession.

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GARNERED SHEAVES. A Tale for Boys. By Mrs. RAYMOND PITMAN. London: Blackie and Son, 49, Old Bailey.

This tale for boys is at once full of interest and instruction. It consists of fifty-two short chapters; each chapter has much to charm the imagination and ennoble the character. The talented authoress wields a fascinating pen, and reveals a spirit that is true in thought and noble in purpose.

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COMING; OR, THE GOLDEN YEAR. A Tale by SELINA GAYE.  
CHANGES AND CHANCES. A Tale by Mrs. CAREY BROCK. London: Seeley, Jackson, and Halliday, 54, Fleet Street.

We put these two books together because both are tales; both productions of a woman's pen; both have the same high purpose; and both are issued from the same publishing house. It would be invidious to compare their respective excellencies and defects, suffice it to say that the spirit, purpose, and style, of both are most excellent, and they can scarcely fail to interest and improve the thoughtful reader.



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